

T W E L V E
S E R M O N S

P R E A C H E D U P O N
S E V E R A L O C C A S I O N S .

A L S O
T H R E E O D E S .

I. T O L I B E R T Y . I I . T O T R U T H .
I I I . O n t h e D A Y O F J U D G M E N T .

B Y T H E
H o n . a n d R e v . W A L T E R S H I R L E Y , A . B .
R E C T O R o f *Loughrea* i n t h e C o u n t y o f *Galway* .

T h e T H I R D E D I T I O N ,
W i t h a S E R M O N o n *Matt. ii, 28*, a n d a n *Ode to Truth* ;
N o t i n t h e f o r m e r E d i t i o n .

L O N D O N :
P r i n t e d f o r J . R o s o n , B o o k s e l l e r , N o . 54,
S t . M a r t i n ' s l e G r a n d .
M . D C C . L X X .

TWELVE
SERMONS

PREACHED BY

AND

THREE ODES



By the Rev. Walter Shirley, A.B.
Rector of the Church of St. Andrew, Cambridge.

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MDCCLXX.

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Gospel Repentance.

MATTHEW iii, 1, 2.

In those Days came John the Baptist preaching in the Wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand.

NO Man could ever be better qualified for the Office of Fore-runner to our blessed Lord, than *John* the Baptist. The miraculous Circumstances that ushered him into Life, declared him to be some extraordinary Person; and these Circumstances were not hid in a Corner, but as *St. Luke* informs us *They were noised abroad throughout all the Hill Country of Judea: And all they that heard them, laid them up in their Hearts, saying, what manner of Child shall this be?* There is a Tradition, that *Herod*, (having heard of the Wonders that accompanied the Birth of *St. John*) when he ordered the Massacre of the Infants at *Bethlehem*, gave particular directions that *John* should be put to Death, although he was not born within the Territory

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of *Bethlehem* ; and this is said to have been the Reason, why his Mother concealed him in a Cave of the Wilderness. Be that as it will, 'tis certain he was educated in the deserts, and continued there till the Day of his shewing unto *Israel*. How happy was the Disposal of Providence in this respect, that being separated from our Saviour to whom he was nearly related from his very Infancy, and never having conversed with him till after he had begun his Ministry, no Suspicion of any Juggle or Contrivance between them, could possibly be administred to the obstinate and malicious. His Testimony therefore in favour of our Lord's Messiahship was so much the more unexceptionable ; and accordingly, when our Saviour pressed it upon his Enemies, they knew not what answer to make to it.

For thirty Years together, the Desert was the School where he learnt Temperance. " Want, says the learned Dr. *Heylin*, taught
 " him Abstinence ; till Grace and Reason
 " gained Strength in him, he embraced that
 " Mortification with a deliberate Choice, in
 " which the Preservation of his Life had
 " first engaged him. Insured to a coarse and
 " scanty Diet, with hard and incommodi-
 " ous Lodging, under the Shelter of some
 " Tree, or Rock, or Cave, he brought his
 " Body into Subjection, and quenched or
 " prevented all Desires that were not found-
 " ed in Reason. He now found the Benefit of
 " Religious Austerities ; no longer a Fugitive,
 " but

“ but a devout Hermit ; an Hermit in his
 “ earliest Youth : And while others of his
 “ Age spent their useleſs Days in vain
 “ Amusements, he, retired from the World,
 “ and, above it, was intent only to Prayer and
 “ Mortification. Treating his Body with
 “ extreme Rigour, and depressing the Flesh
 “ with an unrelenting Severity, he, as it were
 “ refined himself to Spirit ; he had his Con-
 “ versation in Heaven, and lived with the
 “ Purity of an Angel amidst the Cumbrances
 “ of frail Mortality.”

“ IN how different a Manner continues
 “ this elegant Author do the rest of Man-
 “ kind pass their younger Years ? Youth is
 “ accounted by many the Season of licenced
 “ Folly ; to humour and indulge the Appe-
 “ tites, it's allowed Privilege ; and, as if Na-
 “ ture were not sufficiently depraved, fond
 “ and foolish Parents, or Friends, solicit and
 “ provoke their young Desires with new and
 “ various Delicacies : They train them up in
 “ Intemperance, and inance their natural
 “ Pravity with the acquired Malignity of
 “ evil Habits.”

BUT to return : ----- Thus admirably fitted
 to the solemn Office he was to enter on, *John*
 by Example as well as Precept, preached
 Mortification and Repentance for the Remis-
 sion of Sins, saying, *Repent ye, for the*
Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand. His Suc-
 cess was great beyond human Expectation ;
 for without any shining Advantages to re-
 com-

commend him ; without offering any thing that might sooth and flatter the Vices and Appetites of worldly men ; but on the contrary reproving them in the boldest and openest Manner, he gained a prodigious Number of Followers and Disciples of all Ranks and Conditions. Even that Monster of Iniquity *Herod* though he afterwards beheaded him yet he had a Veneration for his Person, and was awed by his Reproof ; and *Knowing* as *St. Mark* says *That he was a just and holy Man, he observed him, and when he heard him, he did many Things, and heard him gladly.*

If the important Subject of the Baptist's Ministry (tho' urged from far less hallowed and less favoured Lips) may yet awaken and engage your Attention, I shall beg leave in the first Place to consider the Nature of true Repentance.-----Secondly, I shall enquire what is meant by the Kingdom of Heaven ; -----Thirdly, I shall expatiate on that encouraging Motive to sincere Repentance, namely, that the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand.

AND First I am to consider what is the Nature of true Repentance.

I. According to the best Theological Authors, Repentance is said to be of two Kinds ; Legal, and Evangelical. 1. What is usually called legal Repentance, is that Regret or Reluctance that ariseth in a Person, after having done something which he ought not to have

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have done. When *Judas* saw that Christ was condemned, it is said of him, that he repented of what he had done. *Mat.* xxvii.

3. He was mightily afflicted in his Mind about it, and wished it had not been done. But this Repentance arises from a Fear of the Punishment denounced against Sin, and is not accompanied with Hatred of Sin: As when a Malefactor suffers for his Crimes, he reflects upon his Actions with Sorrow; but this being a forced Act, proceeding from a violent Principle, is consistent with as great a Love of Sin as he had before, and may be entirely terminated on himself: He may be sorry for his Crimes, as they have exposed him to Punishment, and yet not be grieved that thereby he has offended God. Now though it would be very unsafe to rest in this legal Repentance; and tho' if rested in, it could never bring a Man to a saving Acquaintance with God's pardoning Love; yet it is by no Means to be absolutely cried down and discouraged. Poor, selfish, and servile as it appears to be, it is at least better than a dull Insensibility; it may prepare the Will to be attentive and obedient to the Stirrings of God's preventing Grace, and so be the more remote Means of leading a Man to the true Evangelical Repentance, which in the next place it will be proper to describe.

2. THE Repentance then we are now speaking of, which was the Object of the Baptist's Preaching, which is the only one

acceptable to God, and the only one to which the Promises are made, is the Effect of Man's Free-Will no longer resisting the Impulse of God's preventing Grace (implanted in the Soul of every Son of *Adam*) but on the contrary closing with it, and co-operating under it to the Detection of the hidden Foulness and corruption of his own Heart, with an earnest Struggle to overcome it. It may principally be said to consist in the four following Parts; namely, Conviction, Compunction, Mortification, and Desire of Holiness. I shall speak of each of these particularly.

1. CONVICTION is that first awakening Alarm, that evidently proves to the Sinner, the Danger, Horror, Hell, and Misery of the present State of his Soul. It doth not stand to appeal to particular Facts committed; but lays open at once the Root and Ground of all: Shews him the Ingratitude of his whole Heart; manifests to him, that his regard to God never reached higher than a servile Fear; leaves him not a Word to plead, for placing his Affections either in whole or in part on God's Enemy, the World, and not loving God with all his Heart, with all his Mind, with all his Soul, and with all his Strength; it clearly demonstrates to him that Sin is Misery, and Happiness can only be found in Holiness; and yet pronounces him the Slave of Sin, without any Power or Possibility in himself to extricate himself from it's

Domini-

Dominion and Tyranny : It darts upon him like Lightning, pierces him through and through as with a Sword, beats down all his false Confidences, and strikes him to the ground as *Saul of Tarsus*, till with him he is likewise constrained to cry out all trembling and astonished, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do ?* ----- When Conviction hath proceeded thus far, and hath struck the Mind into a very sore Amazement ; it is presently succeeded, so soon as the Sinner recollects himself, with a severe Compunction, or godly Sorrow ; which is the second Step in the Order of true Repentance.

WHEN I speak of the regular Progress in the penitential State, I would not be thought to infer, that a Man must continue a certain fixed Time under each of these distinctly. No ; God may perform a great Work in a short Time ; and I am persuaded there have been many Instances, of those who have been awakened, converted and received the pardoning Grace of God under a single Sermon. We have abundance of Examples of this sudden and effectual Repentance in the Acts of the Apostles, and a very remarkable one in the Case of the penitent Thief. This I say then has certainly happened in particular Instances ; the general Experience however of Christians has been otherwise. All I am therefore here attempting, is to set before you it's successive Progress in the Soul of Man, in order to give you a clearer, and fuller

Knowledge of the Nature of true Repentance, without any regard had to the Slowness or Precipitancy of its Completion. I shall now resume the Subject.

2. COMPUNCTION, which is consequent to Conviction, is that inward spiritual Grief of the Soul of Man for its lost abandoned State, it's frail and foolish wanderings from its own Home, it's own God, it's own blessed Saviour and Redeemer, that Causes it to take a kind of gloomy Satisfaction in it's own Afflictions, and wrap itself up in the profoundest Sorrow, and refuse to be comforted. It is thoroughly convinced of it's own Darkeness and Blindness, (and to carry on the Figure of the newly awakened *Paul*) it seeks for some one to lead it by the Hand. It watereth the Couch with it's Tears; it's Voice is hoarse with complaining, and yet it knoweth no End thereof: It is weary with watching, and yet taketh no Rest; it hateth the Noise of the Multitude; it despieth the Vanity of Fools; it is greedy and covetous, of it's Grief, and will not that any should partake of it; it seeketh Retirement and Solitude, and venteth its Complaints to the wild Rocks and Caverns. *Will the Lord absent himself for ever: and will he be intreated no more? Is his Mercy clean gone for ever: Is his Promise come utterly to an End for evermore? Where is my Jesus, my Saviour, and my God? My Sins have driven him far away;*

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away; where, O where shall I seek and find him?

THE Soul thus deeply panged and wounded, presently discovers the latent poisonous Corruption, that feeds and enflames the Sore (and so delays the Cure of it,) drawing its venomous Principle from the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life; and therefore it proceeds to the Extirpation of all these by Mortification, which is the third Progress of the Soul in the penitential State.

3. THERE is no Doctrine hath been more grossly abused in the ordinary Practice of the World, than that of Mortification: And whilst some have totally neglected it as useless, and superstitious; others have actually rendered it so, by attributing more to it than really belongs to it. Of the latter Sort are those, who, not content with regarding the Exercises of Mortification, as Means to attain Holiness, or a Means of preparing the Soul for the Influences of God's holy Spirit; have considered, and practised it as Holiness itself; not without a certain Self-satisfaction at the hard Tasks they had imposed on themselves, and challenging a Degree of Merit at God's Hands, for the strictness and severity of their Performances: and thus whilst they have endeavoured to dethrone some one evil Habit, they have advanced another Enemy, and perhaps a far more dangerous one in it's Room; namely, spiritual Pride.

Now Holiness was, is, and always will be the same unalterably for ever and ever. It has the same constituent Parts and Properties, and produces the same blessed Operations and Effects, in Time and in Eternity : It only differs in Degree ; in as much as under the grossness of these earthly Vessels, we cannot possess it pure and unsullied as we shall hereafter, and as the Angels above even now enjoy it. But as Mortification, Self-denial, or the Cross of Christ have no Existence in the Realm, of Light, and constitute no Part of the Holiness of the Blest above ; so neither can they make the least Portion of it among God's chosen People here on Earth. Holiness consists in a firm, full, and perfect Love of God, and of all his Creatures thro' him : And Mortification is only so far necessary, as it suppresses, conquers, and destroys all that may oppose the vital Union of the Soul with God in an effectual Closing with his spiritual Love.

AND yet the absolute Necessity of Mortification, as a Means to effect this, is sufficiently apparent from Scripture and the Reason of Things. Had *Adam* never fell, Mortification would never have been enjoined as a Duty ; but as his Fall consisted in the opening of the low, earthly, bestial Life, so, till that is suppressed in all his Descendants, the divine Image, which was thereby lost, can never be restored, nor Man be reinstated in his primitive Dignity. The proper

per Office therefore of Mortification is to crucify the Flesh, or the Lust and Desires thereof: And the plain Reason is, because the Desires of our fallen Nature are Evil. God would not call on us to crucify the Flesh or the Desires of the Flesh, if the Desires of the Flesh were good: No; St. Paul tells us how the Case stands, and our own Experience confirms it; to wit, *That the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh*; and again he, says, *They that are Christ's have crucified the Flesh with the Affections and Lusts*. It is upon this Account likewise that our blessed Lord assures us, that *Whosoever doth not bear his Cross, and come after him cannot be his Disciple*: He does not say arbitrarily he shall not, but he cannot be my Disciple, he cannot; 'tis impossible in the Nature of Things. God can have no Fellowship with Belial; if Christians are the Temples of the Holy Ghost, as St. Paul styles us, our Temple must be kept pure and undefiled; not a Wish, or the least Tendency of a Wish towards the World, which is at Enmity with God, must be suffered to remain there: And the Instant such Wishes or Inclinations begin to make their foul Appearance, Mortification is the Besom that must sweep them all away. Now as some Infirmities, some Dregs, and Remains of our evil Nature will still continue with the best of us, and not take their leave till the very Hour
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of our Death; so Mortification becomes a Duty indispensably necessary, even to the most confirmed Christians: And accordingly we read of it's being practised in a very rigid Manner, by the Apostles themselves. Yet it will generally be acted with a far higher Degree of Severity under the Horrors of the penitential State, than after being made acquainted with that *Perfect Love which casteth out Fear.*

The poor forlorn, Afflicted Sinner, considers himself as fallen under the Wrath of God; he not only hates Sin, that has brought him to this evil Pass; but likewise condemns and hates himself for having committed it. He is so far from favouring or indulging the Flesh, that he is determined to suppress its Tyranny, and to conquer, punish, and humble it, with a more than ordinary Zeal. Thus (to pursue the Relation of the Apostle's Conversation,) *Paul* was three Days and three Nights without either Eating or Drinking. And this is preparatory to the Introduction of the fourth and last Step of a sincere and effectual Repentance; namely, the Desire of Holiness.

4. WHEN the Soul hath seen and felt it's Disease and Misery through Conviction; hath not only grieved and lamented it's wretched State with a very sore Compunction; but hath likewise applied the Caustick of Mortification, to subdue and wear away the proud Flesh, with all the acrid stimulating Humours that

that fed and pampered its Disorder ; it may then hope to acquire more wholesome Juices and a sounder and better Constitution. It not only hates and detests its former Inclinations and Affections, but it begins to pant after new ones. It earnestly looks up to the Shepherd of *Israel*, and intreats to be admitted into the richest Pastures : The Power of Prayer begins to open and expand within it, and the Holy Spirit itself, helping it's infirmities, maketh intercession for it with Groanings that can never be uttered. These Prayers are presented by the blessed Jesus before the Throne of Grace ; he points to his dear Wounds, and pleads the all-sufficiency of that Sacrifice ; a Plea all-powerful and efficacious. His Blood is held forth to the Sinner, who eagerly and joyfully layeth hold of it ; and through the Merit of that appropriated to him by Faith, he is made a blessed Partaker of the Kingdom of Heaven.

THIS naturally leads me to the second general Head I had proposed ; namely what is meant by the Kingdom of Heaven.

II. IN order to gain a more satisfactory Idea of the Kingdom of Heaven, let us first take Notice of its Opposites which are in a constant War with it, and without the Reduction and entire Demolition of which, it can never be thoroughly fixed and established : and these are the Kingdom of Self, the Kingdom of the World, and that which gives Laws to both these as deriving under it, I mean

mean the Kingdom of Satan. All these have their Interests and Influences in poor fallen Man : And, unless Christ had come to save him, he could no more have delivered himself from this threefold Slavery, than he could raise a Tower to reach Heaven, like the foolish Attempt of the deluded Builders of *Babel*.

Now that the Kingdom of Self was first established in the Soul of Man by the malignant Policy of the old Serpent, is evident from this ; that the Fall of Man was of the same Nature, and from the same Principle, as the fall of Satan. For Satan had sown his Seed in him : (Therefore it is that wicked Men are called the Seed of the Serpent, Generation of Vipers, and the Children of the Devil.) Both disdaining any longer to seek and obtain their Happiness from God alone, had endeavoured to derive it immediately and independently from themselves : Both had aspired to be as *Gods discerning Good and Evil*, without submitting to God's holy, wise, and just Directions in what was to be chosen, or avoided, in the several Objects presented to them : Both therefore had rebelled against the Throne of God, though both Rebels were not dealt by in the same Manner. Man had neither fallen from the same Height, nor into the same Depth that Satan had, and had been moved and instigated by the Wiles and Subtilties of the latter : Man therefore could be redeemed from
his

his State of Sin and Misery by the myſterious and amazing Sacrifice of the Son of God ; but the Devil had fallen even beyond the Power of Redemption, being ſo wrapt up and entangled in the Web of Sin he had ſpun, and is ſtill ſpinning from his own Bowels, that Repentance could never reach him : For if it were poſſible for him to repent truly and thoroughly, the God of Mercy and of Love, would yet point out ſome way even for him to eſcape.--But to proceed : The Seed of Satan being ſown in Man, (for want of his Circumſpection, Vigilance and Attention to God's Holy Will and Commandments) the Temper, Diſpoſition, and Affections of the Arch Enemy began to break forth in him, and the Kingdom of Self was preſently eſtabliſhed. Thus Man became covetous, proud, a Boaſter, ſelf ſeeking, ambitious, a Lover of Pleaſure, more than a Lover of God. Therefore our Lord and Saviour commands us, if we would be Followers of him, not to gratify Self ; no, we muſt deny Self ; *Whoſoever will come after me let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs.* Mark viii, 34. And the Reaſon is, becauſe in gratifying Self ; we are Followers or Imitators of Satan, and are ſtill Subjects and Servants of the Kingdom of Self.

Again, Man is the Bubble, Servant, and Slave of the Kingdom of the World, which has an intereſt and Power within him of ſomewhat different Nature from the former,

mer, tho' in strict Union, and Alliance with it. As it's Elements, its Productions, and natural Evils exercise Dominion over the Body, and bring on its Diseases, and Death itself ; so its Blandishments, and it's Vanities, as well as it's Cares, and it's Afflictions, usurp a boundless Tyranny over the Soul. We are so beduped by it's Sorceries, and Enchantments, that we confirm one another in Subjection to it ; and he that is most forward in a mean abject Complacency to the World, is the most carested, and applauded among us. Self issues forth it's Laws to oblige us to a Compliance with the World, and the World on the other Hand affords the vicious Means of Self Gratification. Thus both Powers are united for our Ruin and Destruction : And from this Slavery to the World we derive the Principles of sneaking Art and Flattery, Dissimulation and Falshood, Vanity and Effeminacy, Cowardice and Infidelity. It is upon this Account, that seeing the Danger for us, which we neither are aware of ourselves, nor disposed to avoid, the Holy Ghost gives us Warning, thro' the Apostle John ; *Love not the World, neither the Things that are in the World : If any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him.*

Now that the World derives what Power and Influence it has over us, originally from Satan as the Fountain Head, is evident from many Texts of Scripture. Thus the Devil
is

is called the *Prince of this World*, John xii. 31 and *the God of this World*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. He boasted to our Saviour that he was so, *Mat.* iv. 9. and he acteth in this World as a *Prince powerfully working in the Children of Disobedience*, Eph. ii. 2.

BUT besides these Substitutes of his, the World and Self, by means of which the Evil One continually assaults our Peace, he sways and governs us more immediately in his own personal Application to our Souls, bringing the Kingdom of Satan into that poor fallen Creature, which once was the Residence of God himself. This is the most shocking of all Tyrannies, as in this the very Features of the Devil appear plain and undisguised; and it exerciseth it's Dominion differently, as Men's Souls are variously fitted to receive it; in Proportion as they resist the preventing Grace of God, and so lay themselves more and more open to it's horrid Impressions. From hence come ungoverned Rage, and inhuman Cruelty; furious Lusts, and insatiable Appetites; Revellings and Drunkenness, Rapine and Murder, Cursing and Swearing, Imprecations and Blasphemies; a black and baleful Train, which carry their own hell about them, and give us a faint but dismal Foretaste of the Torments of the Damned.

BEHOLD then this Apostate Man, this Apostate from the State of Bliss and Glory, in which God had placed him; behold him now
swallowed

swallowed up in Self; now cringing to, cloying with, and dependant on a vile and cursed World, now drove about and reeling in the Whirlwind of divers Lusts and Passions; and wondering adore that inexhausted Fund of Mercies, which yet vouchsafes to pity and to save, which yet affords Repentance as the Means, and yet holds forth to us all, undeserving as we are, the Kingdom of Heaven as the End.

THIS Kingdom, established on the Ruins of the Devil's Empire, begins its gentle Sway by proclaiming liberty to the wretched Captive; calls all its Subjects no longer Slaves, but Sons; Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Christ; enables us to trample the whole Power of Sin and Satan under our Feet, the Bruiser of the Serpent's Head himself not disdaining to reside within us, and make use of us as his Instruments for manifesting his Victory over his fallen Foe. He triumphs most gloriously in the Hearts of all his People; and he causes their Hearts to triumph through the Mightiness of their Succourer and Defender. As God deigned outwardly to reign over the *Jews* in their State of Theocracy, till the Time of *Samuel*, so now doth he, in the most gracious and condescending Manner, reign inwardly, and fixes his holy and blessed Kingdom in the Souls of his chosen Subjects, the *Israel* of God, the Children of the Faith of *Abraham*. His Reign is evident, first in the dethroning of the cursed Usurper,

Usurper, and the extirpating the very Root and Branch of wilful Sin: Secondly, in his blessed and effectual Influence over the Will and Affections, and bringing in a new Law, even the Law of Liberty into Men's Souls; the glorious Law of Liberty from dead Works, that they may henceforth *serve the Lord without Fear, in Holiness and Righteousness before him all the Days of their Lives.*

The Kingdom of Heaven, in the Words of the Text, and in the parallel Passages in the New Testament, hath both a general, and a private Sense. 1. In the general Sense it includes the whole Church of Christ, all true Believers of all Nations, Parties and Interests; all whomsoever the Lord our God hath called, who having obeyed the Call, and repented, have been justified freely through Faith, by the Grace of Jesus Christ. These are the Subjects of God's Kingdom of Heaven upon Earth; and they have one summary Law given them, which however difficult to others, is to them, thro' the indwelling Power of Christ, easy, practicable and delightful; namely, *to love the Lord their God with all their Hearts, with all their Minds, with all their Souls, and with all their Strength, and their Neighbour as themselves.*

2. In the more private Sense, it is confined to the Impartment of God's Holy Spirit to particular Persons. Man is in himself a Microcosm,

crocosm, a little World ; he hath within him a Variety of Affections, Passions and Interests, opposite often to each other, which like contending Parties in an ill-governed Commonwealth, raise a Fermentation that endangers the whole : But the Kingdom of Heaven, when it has once taken Place, causeth these Fermentations to subside, and God holding forth one Glorious Object, even the Light of his Love, to which every Affection, and Inclination of Man should tend as to it's proper Centre, they are all here kept in Union ; and God speaks Peace into the ruffled Soul, as he bids the Waves of the raging Sea be still. Moreover God directs and governs in a peculiar Manner every one whom he hath justified ; he submits to be consulted by him in humble Prayer, and returns wise, suitable and gracious Answers, in a Manner not outwardly to be expressed, but only spiritually to be felt and discerned. The Kingdom of Heaven therefore is internal and spiritual ; *The Kingdom of God* (says our blessed Saviour) *is within you.* Luke xvii, 21. And again, St. Paul tells us, Rom. xiv, 17. *The Kingdom of God is Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost.*

1. It is Righteousness ; and it not only instructeth Man in the Way of Righteousness, but it likewise enableth him to walk in it according to God's Will ; it is not a human, but a divine Righteousness, bringing with it into the Soul the Mind that was in Christ Jesus.

2. It

2. It is Peace; and such a Peace as passeth all Understanding; a Peace which the World had never to afford us; it is derived to us from our *Melchisedec* the King of *Salem*, which signifies Peace; and how comfortably sweet, how beyond Measure full must our Peace be, when the whole Kingdom of Peace is poured forth into our Souls? They who have newly recovered from a long and painful Disease of the Body, know experimentally the Blessing of Sound Health; (a Blessing little regarded in general, whilst we are in the full and perfect Enjoyment of it;) how much more then are they, who have felt and tasted the Misery of a diseased Soul, inwardly healed and refreshed by the reviving Cordial of the atoning Blood, being at Peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord?

3. LASTLY, the Kingdom of God is Joy in the Holy Ghost. It is a Joy serene, pure, holy and unmixed; a Joy which no man taketh from us; and which all the Powers of Satan and his accursed Agents can never hurt or disturb. It triumphs in the midst of Tribulation; it smileth at the Rage of Persecution, and still cherisheth the Heart under the most afflicting and agonizing Torments. What shall I say more? had I the Tongue of Men and Angels, I could never give any adequate Description of the Soul's dear precious Joy in the holy Ghost. — It is Eloquence to be silent, where no Expression can reach the Immenfity of the Subject.

I PROCEED under the Third general head, to consider that great and encouraging Motive to sincere Repentance ; namely, that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

III. IT is a present Good, attainable here on Earth. If Men might not have some Foretaste and Experience (however faint and glimmering in Comparison) of that Eternal Weight of Glory, which shall be their Portion and Inheritance in the World to come ; their poor frail Nature would be discouraged and sink under the Oppression of worldly Troubles, or be easily allured and led aside, through the false Glare and Enticement of worldly Vanity. A distant Reversion of Bliss, however probable in the Expectation, will not have its due Influence and Effects in the Minds of Men in general ; and accordingly 'tis observable, that they only who really believe it to be at hand, press forward into the Kingdom, and take it (as it were) by Violence. And blessed be God, he hath not left us in any Doubt concerning this Earnest of our Salvation, afforded us, to sooth and support us in our weary Pilgrimage; not only having raised up Witnesses of this Truth, even many Thousands of his faithful People who know, and can attest it upon their own Experience ; but hath also assured us of it in innumerable Passages of his infallible Word. Thus, after Jesus heard that *John* was cast into Prison, he began his Preaching with the very Words of the Baptist ; *Repent ye for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand.*

Again,

AGAIN, he saith, *John iii, 36. He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting Life.* He speaks in the present Tense, he hath it now, *He is sealed unto the Day of the Lord: The Spirit of God witnesseth with his Spirit that he is a Child of God. Rom. viii. 16.* Or as St. Paul has it, *2 Cor. i. 22. He hath also sealed us, and given the Earnest of the Spirit in our Hearts.* Again *Ephes. i. 13. In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise which is the Earnest of your Inheritance, until the Redemption of the purchased Possession, unto the Praise of his Glory.* Now the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven in the Text, and the *Earnest of our Inheritance through the Holy Spirit of Promise* is one and the same Thing, as is evident from the fore-cited Definition of the Kingdom of Heaven by St. Paul; namely, that *It is Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost*: For what is this *Earnest of the Inheritance through the Holy Spirit*, but *Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost*. And this is agreeable to St. Peter, *1 Peter, i. 8, 9. Whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory: receiving the End of your Faith, even the Salvation of your Souls.* I shall not produce any more out of the many remaining Texts

of Scripture to this point ; presuming that I have already clearly proved beyond any Possibility of even a plausible Contradiction, the important Doctrine of present Salvation, or that the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand. All that seems necessary at present is to press the close Application of it upon all your Hearts.

AND surely, if any Motive can intice, if any Argument can persuade, if any Encouragement can prevail on you, to forego the shadowy Vanities of Time, in order to lay hold of the substantial Joys reserved for you in Eternity ; this blest Assurance of Faith, this experimental Fortaste of Spiritual Bliss, cannot fail to have its Charms with you, and sweeten the bitter Chalice of Repentance.

By the long-suffering Patience of the Almighty, I call on you to Repent : by the yet Bleeding Wounds of the Blessed Jesus, O Hearts of Stone repent : By the great and glorious privileges held forth to you, Repent, *Repent ye for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand.* Honoured as I am with this gracious Message to you, O let me not be an unsuccessful Ambassador, but yield yourselves to my Intreaties, to my Prayers, to my unbounded Love for you. Do not poorly content yourselves with faring as well as your Neighbours, but rather be solicitous for the Rightness of the Way, than the Number of the Company. Think only how small a
Thing

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thing is required of you; the renouncing a World of Woe, Disappointment, Misery and Disease; think of the happy Exchange afforded. The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand for you. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil Ways, and cry to the Lord with deep Contrition; so shall he be swift to hear, and mighty to defend; so shall he deliver you from more than an *Egyptian* Bondage, and thus when *He hath set your Feet at Liberty, you will run with joy the Way of his Commandments*, Which that we may *all* do: God of his infinite Mercy grant, &c.

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S E R M O N

SERMON II.

On the great Importance of Time.

Psalm xc. 12.

*So teach us to number our Days that we may
apply our Hearts unto Wisdom.*

THE Psalm from whence this Verse is taken, was composed by *Moses*. It is a Meditation of his on the Brevity of Man's Life, occasioned by God's having shortened the Days of the *Israelites* to seventy, or eighty Years at the most; because they had grievously provoked him in the Wilderness, and particularly by murmuring at the Relation the Spies brought them of the Promis'd Land. Therefore he suffered them not to arrive at the Age of their Ancestors, or of *Moses*, *Caleb*, and *Joshua*, whose Lives he prolonged to a hundred and twenty Years.

As Time, whose swift and unheeded Step he here laments, is swallowed up in Eternity; so, with the greatest Propriety, he begins the Psalm with magnifying the Eternal Existence of the great God, and Father of us all. *Lord, thou hast been our Dwelling Place in all Generations; before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed*

formed the Earth or the World; even from Everlasting to Everlasting thou art God.

He then turns him to consider the calamitous State of Man, as existing in the narrow Confines of Time; a Portion broken off from the deathless Being originally assigned to him in his Charter; a Charter, which by his own voluntary Act he had fatally forfeited, and is now adjudged to the horrible Darkness of the Grave.

Thou turnest Man, says he, to Destruction; and sayest, Return ye Children of Men. Return O Man to that Ground, from whence thou wast formed; for Dust thou art, and unto Dust shalt thou Return. For a thousand Years in thy Sight are but as Yesterday when it is past, and as a Watch in the Night. Could we live even beyond the Age of the first Race of Men, which reach'd to near a thousand Years; yet even then we should be wretched, since still it must pass away; and how short does it appear when it is gone? But above all, how insignificantly short in the sight of God! for a thousand Years with the Lord is but as one Day, and one Day as a thousand Years.

THE inspired Author goes on in the most lively and striking Images, to describe the impetuous Volubility of Time, and compares its Devastations to the overbearing Torrent of a Flood; and the shadowy Vanity of hu-

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man Life to the vague Impressions of Men's Dreams in Sleep, and the transient Verdure of the fading Herbage. He then proceeds to point out the Cause of this woeful State of Things, namely God's just Displeasure and Wrath against Sin; the original Sin of *Adam* and the aggregated Heap of his degenerate Offspring. *Thou hast set our Iniquities before thee, our secret Sins in the Light of thy Countenance. For all our Days are passed away in thy Wrath: We spend our Years as a Tale that is told. The Days of our Years are threescore Years and ten, They are now reduced to so short a Space as this; And if by reason of Strength they be fourscore Years, yet is their Strength Labour and Sorrow: for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knoweth or who considereth the Power of thine Anger? even according to thy Fear so is thy Wrath.* That is, the most dreadful Apprehensions of wicked Men do not exceed the terrible Vengeance which thy Wrath hath prepared for the Ungodly. Then follow the Words of the Text; *So teach us to number our Days that we may apply our Hearts unto Wisdom.* Teach and enable us by the Influence of thy Spiritual Grace, so effectually to weigh and ponder on the shortness of our Duration here, that we may renounce, despise, and trample on the empty Goods of a perishable World, and set our Affections upon things above.

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THESE Words evidently point out to us, what I propose in the following Discourse to consider, first, the Need we have to be taught to number our Days; and 2dly, the blessed Effects naturally to be expected from thence, That we may apply our Hearts unto Wisdom.

I. THE first thing proposed is, the need we have to be taught to number our Days.

THERE is a wide Difference between a Man's assenting to a Proposition as true, and his inwardly receiving it as a governing Principle. To apply this to ourselves; it will be readily and universally acknowledged as true: that it is appointed to all Men once to die: they will readily acknowledge the uncertainty of human Life, and the Shortness of it at the most. All this they will acknowledge, because Nature and Reason, and every thing about us do so strongly assert and prove it, that there's no evading it; no mathematical Demonstration can be clearer. But mark how they contradict themselves; do they in any respect act as if they were deeply convinced of it? No; if Men's Actions are the genuine Fruits of their Principles or Opinions, they act as if they were persuaded that here is their fixed Abode, that this is their resting Place for ever. A certain very ingenious Poet hath elegantly touch'd this extravagant Inconsistency.

All Men think all Men mortal but themselves;

Themselves, when some alarming Shock of Fate

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Strikes through their wounded Hearts the sudden Dread ;

But their Hearts wounded, like the wounded Air,

Soon close ; where past the Shaft, no Trace is found.

As from the Wing no Scar the Sky retains ;

*The parted Wave no Furrow from the Keel ;
So dies in Human Hearts the Thought of Death.*

And yet, what hath God omitted, that could reasonably be expected from an all wise and gracious Being, in giving us sufficient and super-abundant Notices of our approaching End ; whether by the plain Dictates of Reason, or the most solemn Assurances of Revelation ; by manifest Types and Signs ; or the undeniable Evidence of our Senses ? The dreary Desolation of Winter is an annual Memento of our Deaths ; as the flourishing Revival of Spring is a glorious Type of our Resurrection. The putrid Carcasses of Animals from above Ground, give an offensive Gust of Mortality ; whilst the voice of Friendship from the Grave calls on us for a Union there. Even he who pours to Day his Tears upon the honoured Dead, perhaps shall be tomorrow the very Thing he mourns. The holy Texts and uncouth Rhimes, yet to be seen on the Tombs of our Ancestors, instruct us in this short but useful Lesson ; what they *once* were, what we *shall* be. Doth a single Feature,

Feature, doth an Atom remain of some of these, distinguished from their mother Earth? May we not justly shovel up the Clay, and say, Behold the Man? Behold all that remains of him, who in the midst of his Air-built Schemes for Ages to come, in the midst of his planting and building, his marrying or giving in Marriage, brought hither his bereaved Hopes, brought hither his disappointed Care!

AND are these awful Receptacles of our forsaken Bodies, only cramm'd with the worn-out and the Aged? Doth not the grim insatiate Tyrant mock at the Expectations of Youth, and feed upon the Roses of Beauty? How often does the Child prove a Monitor to the Father, and in the dumb Eloquence of Death yield them a Lecture on his Vanity? And yet what Advantage do we gain by these solemn Instructors? What Preparations are we making for the inevitable Hour? Time fleets by us unloaded, unadorned with the Atchievements of our Souls, and many a hoary Head is grown grey in the very Greenness of its Follies. Is provident Wisdom excluded from our very Being? Must we pass raw and unexperienced through every Period of Life? Will neither the nervous Reason of Manhood in its Vigour, nor the wretched Feebleness of decrepid Age, remind us of the Dust where shortly we must mingle? Ye gloomy Sepulchres beneath our Feet unfold your loath-

some Prisons to our View. Ye ghastly Spectacles of Horror now cankering in your Shrouds, burst forth from the Bands that hold you, and teach these busy Flutterers of an Hour, that your dreary Mansions are their destined Home; your terrifying Aspects are the Images of what they themselves shall assuredly become. Bid the Proud, the Insolent, and Tyrannical, *there* elbow for a larger Spot of Earth; the vain and conceited of their Persons, *there* brag of the Elegance of their Complexion; and the lovers of Gaiety and Pleasure, grin *there* even in Mockery of themselves. Yet wherefore? if Nature and Reason plead in vain; if Conscience is stupified with Opiates; if the Law and the Prophets are despised; if the Promises of the Gospel can't allure, nor the Terror of its Threatenings awaken; if nothing hitherto afforded, can incite Men to consider their latter End, and make Provision for the future, neither would they listen, neither would they be moved, though one rose and preached to them from the Dead.

OH what a Paradox is Man to Man! how strangely inconsistent, how full of Contradictions! how extensive in Faculty, how abstract in Practice! how glorious in Reason, how trifling in Action! on the Wing of Speculation he can mount to the starry Firmament, he can acquaint himself with the heavenly Bodies, and describe their Revolutions; yet he cannot sufficiently contemplate the Shortness

ness of his temporal Being, or in any wise act conformably to the Deductions which will naturally follow.

'Tis not that he is ignorant of the universal Destiny ; 'tis not that he can deny it when offered as a Proposition ; but the Prospect is so dreary, so dark, and uncomfortable, that he wishfully shuts his Eyes against what requires the most piercing Foresight ; he endeavours to forget what it most concerns him to remember.

'Tis not in human Wisdom to reconcile to us what Nature starts back and revolts at ; our foolish Affections are rivetted to that World to which we grow, and are part of it ; to tear us from its Delusions is to burst the Strings of our Souls. 'Tis only in Revelation to comfort us ; to clear up those baleful Clouds that rest upon the Grave, and to point out to us the pure Azure of our Existence, beyond the Darkness of its Domain. Nay, the revealed Word itself will make but feeble Impression, till the special Grace of God applies it with Power upon our Hearts ; it will appear to us, alas ! but as a dead Letter, till the Holy Spirit of God gives it Life. Our Hopes, our Expectations, our Confidence, our assurance in the great Salvation obtain'd to us through our dear Lord and Saviour, will be then awakened and called forth to a vigorous Activity ; the Vanities of the World will be unheeded by us, as the Toys of Children, or the Frivoliety of
C 5 Women ;

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Women; and the Sufferings of this present Time will be considered as not worthy to be compared with the Glory that shall be revealed in us. Thus enabled, directed, and emboldened, to look forward with a stedfast and considerate Eye, to the Number and End of our Days, the blessed Effects will naturally follow, we shall apply our Hearts unto Wisdom. Which was the second Thing I proposed to consider.

II. THE Word Wisdom in this Place, and in many other Passages of Holy Scripture, signifies true Piety, or the Fear of God. Thus *Job xxviii. 28. The Fear of the Lord that is Wisdom.* And Parallel to this is the *cxi. Psalm, 10th Ver. The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom; a good Understanding have all they that do thereafter; the Praise of it endureth for ever.* And what will so naturally excite in us this Fear of the Lord, which is the Beginning of Wisdom, as frequent and effectual Meditations on the Brevity of Human Life? When we deeply reflect on the perishable State of Things here, and the gradual Progress of our own selves towards Corruption; we shall presently let go our hold; we shall no longer place our Confidence in what we evidently see must fail us; and we shall endeavour to discover some substantial Compensations, for the Wreck of our blasted Cares, the Ruin of our childish Hopes. We shall then look on those Things

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as Foolishness, which refer us to the Delusions of Vanity ; we shall only consider that as Wisdom, which is able to make us wise unto Salvation.

NEITHER an extensive Knowledge of Languages, nor a complete Skill in the Sciences, nor the exalted Flights of Philosophy, can satisfy the Hunger of the Mind in its anxious and most interesting Demands ; the Gospel only can appease its Doubts, fill it, and make it blest, because Life and Immortality are only brought to Light through the Gospel, *Where is the wise ? Where is the Scribe ? Where is the Disputer of this world ? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this World ? For after that, in the wisdom of God, the World by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the Foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.* That is, when the utmost Efforts of human or worldly Wisdom could not attain to a due and perfect Knowledge of God, or gain a comfortable and satisfactory View of a future State ; it pleased God, by the preaching of the Cross of Christ, which was to the learned *Greeks* Foolishness, and to the *Jews* a stumbling Block, to point out his gracious Methods of Salvation to all those that have earnest Ears to hear, and willing Hearts to believe : *For with the Heart, Man believeth unto Righteousness.* If the blessed Wisdom that cometh down from above was to be obtained merely by
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the Strength of Understanding, and the Improvement of Education, then God would not have dealt equally by all his Creatures; and those that were not so happy as to be born under these shining Advantages, would either be enslaved to the Opinions of the learned, or totally deprived of Spiritual Instruction. But the contrary of this is very evident both from the Objects to whom the Gospel is particularly addressed, *To the Poor the gospel is Preached*, and likewise from the Persons themselves to whom the Commission at first was given; being poor, mean, illiterate Men, for the most part no better than Fishermen. *Thus hath God chosen the foolish things of the world* saith St. Paul *to confound the wise; and the weak Things of the world to confound the Things which are mighty; and base Things of the world, and Things which are despised hath God chosen; yea, and Things which are not, to bring to nought Things that are: That no Flesh should glory in his Presence.* 'Tis not therefore Head knowledge, mere speculative Systems, which Moses had in View in the Words of the Text; No, says he, *So teach us to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto wisdom.* This is the great End and Design of Christianity, that our Hearts may be turned from Folly; that our Hearts may be applied unto Wisdom. Therefore was the Infusion of the Holy Ghost

Ghost purchased for us by the Blood of Christ, that a Spiritual Change might be brought about in the inward Affections of our Hearts; a Change, which by our own natural Strength, we are by no Means capable of effecting. And what is the apparent Reason, why God should ever intend that such an Alteration should be made in our Desires? It is not from any peevish Gratification he hath in turning us from the sensual Enjoyments of the World, merely because we have a high Pleasure and Delight in them: It is with the same provident Care and Goodness, that a Father would snatch a Child from fondly playing and diverting itself with a Viper: he does it, because he is perfectly well acquainted with the lurking Venom of the noxious Animal: The Child perhaps will think it hard to be torn thus from what amused or pleased him: yet, if he knew to judge aright, he would approve his Father's Tenderness and Love. In like Manner our Heavenly Father knows, that this World can administer nothing but deadly Poison to our Souls. Had it been otherwise; could this World have been a Fountain of real not fictitious Happiness to us; God is Love; he hath the tenderest Regard to the true Interest of all his Creatures; and he would certainly have made that, our eternal State, from whence we were to draw the most consummate Happiness. But God in his infinite

Wisdom

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Wisdom knew that he *himself* was the *only* Fountain of Happiness; and that therefore we are grasping at Shadows, and let go the Substance. Now Happiness is only communicable to the will and Affections; and the Will and Affections can only receive it, by being wholly, fully, and absolutely turn'd towards it. But if the Will and Affections are in any respect turn'd towards the World, then they are not wholly, fully and absolutely turned towards the Fountain of Happiness; therefore the Fountain of Happiness can never fill them, and therefore of natural Consequence the Man must be miserable.

MAN did not stand originally in this World, upon the Footing he is now. Tho' he lived in it, he was above it; his Affections were not tainted by it; but were all wound up in God, from whence he drew his Happiness immediately, as from the proper Fountain. The Dominion of so pure a Being, as Man then was over the whole World, rendered all around him pure, innocent, and blessed. But the Case is now very much altered; for when the Devil through the Fall, had gain'd a Sovereignty over Man, he inclusively, under that Sovereignty, obtained a Power over the World which had been subjected to Man. From whence he was permitted to introduce Strife and Contention among all the Elements, spiritual as well as bodily Evils, dangerous Temptations, Terrors to shake our Constancy,

Constancy, Allurements to delude our Sense, raging Appetites, infamous Lusts, Sickneſs and Diſeaſe, till the Grave, by God's ſingular Mercy and Goodneſs, becomes our *Refuge*. The World therefore is not now what it was at firſt intended to be; and 'tis as dangerous to toy with its Delights, as to play with the envenomed Aſp.

I AM well aware that this Doctrinè is neither popular nor pleaſing; I am ſenſible many will not approve, what I mean to urge againſt worldly Gaieties and Amulements. But ſhall I therefore *ſlacken* my Zeal, or with-hold Reproof? God forbid I ſhould flatter you ſo baſely to your own Loſs. — But what! (perhaps it will be ſaid,) *will any one be damn'd for Dancing or Card playing?* — Hold a little; let us ſtate the Caſe fairly and clearly, and then determine as Reaſon ſhall direct. I do not ſuppoſe God will enquire particularly in what Manner you have fooled away your Time; but whether you have improved the Whole, and every Portion of it that was allotted you, to his Honour and Glory. If therefore it can be truly ſaid, that you danced, played Cards and ſo forth, to the Honour and Glory of God, you ſtand fairly acquitted in my Opinion, I aſſure you.

Is any one offended at the high Rank wherein I mean to place you? Does any one complain, that I do not merely conſider you as groveling Worms, but as aspiring
Immortals?

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Immortals? — Pardon me, I beseech you, this Injury: I would discountenance such Amusements, as are unsuitable to your august Dignity, and would recommend to you such Delights, as would bring down a Heaven upon Earth.

WE smile at the Anticks of Brute Animals, and perhaps pity them that they are not capable of more exalted Pleasures. But for a rational Being, formed for a free Commerce with the Almighty God, formed to be the Temple of the Holy Ghost, and the Heir of Heaven; for so illustrious a Creature to demean himself to a Dancing-Dog, or a Chattering Monkey; — My whole Soul is all on Fire at the Thought, and I cannot but inveigh against it, with the warmest indignation.

O Blessed and Holy Jesus, surrounded with thy suffering Saints and Martyrs, turn away thine Eyes, nor behold the indecent Levity of this People; these who dare to call themselves Christians; that is, the Followers, and Imitators of Jesus Christ.

WHERE is the Cross of Christ? Shall we seek for it in an Assembly? Where is the blessed Poverty of Spirit? Is it to be found in Dicing and Carding? — For shame, for shame, my Brethren; do not thus dishonour that Holy Name whereby you are called; do not debase the Human Nature wherein God himself designed to appear incarnate; O for Christ's Sake do not debase it to so disgraceful

graceful a Prostitution. — The Time afforded us is *full scant* enough, for the mighty Work to be wrought in it; let us learn to husband every Hour, and every Moment; let us employ it in a Manner suitable to the Design of God in our Creation and Redemption; let us not vitiate our Palates with the frothy, windy Vanities of the World? but let us be earnestly solicitous to contract such a Taste and Relish for the joys of Heaven, as can alone put us in a Capacity to be Partakers of them.

THE Affections are the Wings of the Soul: Let us seek to have ours disengaged from the clammy Sweets that clogg them, and impede our Flight. So, light and easy shall we mount aloft: so, shall we defy the Sting of Death; so, shall we mock at the Triumph of the Grave.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost be ascribed, as is most due, all Praise, Might, Majesty and Dominion, both now and for Evermore.

SERMON III.

The Way to eternal Life.

John xvii. 3.

And this is Life Eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

OUR Blessed Lord in this Chapter is making a pathetic and most affectionate Prayer to God the Father on the Eve before he suffered; recommending to the divine Protection and special providential Care, all such as at that Time did, or afterwards should believe in his Name.

HE is here evidently Speaking in his mediatorial Character; and yet even in this supplicating Address, the resplendent Rays of his Divinity do so irresistibly beam forth through the veil of his Flesh, that the God over all Blessed for ever, stands in undiminished majesty confess'd. Thus verse 10. he says, *All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them*; implying the closest union, equality and participation in the Godhead. And even in the words of the Text, the Knowledge of Jesus Christ

I. Christ is made as essentially necessary to eternal Life, as the Knowledge of God the Father: He therefore doth not use the Term, *only true God* to the exclusion of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, but to the exclusion of all the False Gods of the *Heathen* worshippers.

We have in this our Saviour's prayer, a full and lively Illustration of what is gratefully and piously observed by the Evangelist in another Place, that *When Jesus knew that his Hour was come, that he should depart out of this World unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the World, he loved them unto the End.* For notwithstanding he had just foretold them in the preceding Chapter that the Time was approaching, in which they should every one of them forsake him, and fly, and leave him, deserted, friendless, and exposed to the Rage of his Enemies, he did not upon this Account withdraw his tender Compassion from them, but reposes them under the peculiar Tutelage and Guardianship of his Heavenly Father.

HAVING lifted up his Eyes in an earnest and importunate Manner, the natural posture of a zealous and sincere Devotion, he begins with making his Desire known to the Father, *That he would glorify his Son, that the Son might also glorify him.* For as the Glory of the Son appeared in being the immediate Means of bringing Life and Immortality to Light, so the Glory of the Father

ther was manifested, in having given his only Son for these benign and gracious Purposes. Therefore, says he, *Glorify thy Son*, that is, by disposing and influencing the Minds of Men through thy preventing Grace, to receive him as their Saviour and Redeemer; for no one can come to Christ, unless the Father draw him: and again, the Son shall glorify thee, by doing and suffering all Things which were determined in thy wise and holy Counsels, before the World existed; by leading Men to a full fiducial and unbounded Trust in the Blessed Trinity, that they may serve God without Fear, in Holiness and Righteousness before him all the Days of their Life; and by pointing thee out as the ultimate Object of divine Worship through the Son, since no man cometh to the Father but by me.

BEHOLD how dearly our Redeemer loveth us, when he makes his own Glory to consist in being the Fountain of eternal Life in Bliss to his own Disciples (properly so call'd whom he had chosen out of the World) in the first Place, and to all true Believers to the End of Time, who should with open Hearts receive the Word through their Preaching and Ministry.

SINCE this then was the gracious End of Christ's coming into the World, to give eternal *Life* to those who were *Dead* in Trespases and Sins; and since eternal Life doth consist in knowing the only true God
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and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent ; it will be necessary to enquire first into the Nature and Extent of this divine Knowledge. Secondly, I shall endeavour to recommend and enforce it by such Arguments as are most likely to engage your assiduous Attentions to this the most important of all Concerns.

I. Now the first openings of the human Mind on the Light of Nature do, forcibly, as it were, and beyond the power of Resistance, admit a permanent Impression and Belief, that all the regular Systems we see around us, was not the Effect of jumbled Atoms in the Hand of Chance, but was the great and glorious Workmanship of a Being, supreme beyond the Conception of created Faculties, eternal in Existence, infinite in Power, and abounding in Love.

THIS Persuasion or rather Conviction of the Mind of the Existence of a Deity, is the first Ground and Foundation on which the Principles of what we call natural Religion are Built ; for *He that cometh to God says the Apostle must believe that he is ;* and thence he will be presently brought to a further Belief, *That he is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* The Soul spontaneously inquisitive, what, how, or whence it is, whenever it is left to its own free Agency unburthened by worldly trifles or groveling cares, longs after an Acquaintance with that blessed Source of Goodness from whence it issued forth :

knows, it cannot but know, that he that first breathed into it this curiously exploring Desire, gave it merely with a View to its ample gratification; only meant to be *earnestly* sought, that he might be the more successfully and more happily found. We have learned by a Kind of fatal Experience, that the greatest Blessings when *cheaply* obtain'd to us, are but lightly esteemed; and that much Pains are required in the *Pursuit* to endear the *Fruition* of the desired Object. Neither Health, Peace or Plenty, are presented to us in the most advantageous Point of View, till the want of each of these has made Way for its entertainment with a more ardent Joy. In Compliance therefore to this Infirmary, and in Support of his august Dignity, God maketh the Darknes his Pavillion, and veileth his Glories in a Cloud. He hath however transmitted one gleaming Ray from his resplendent Brightness, which lessening to a Point upon the soul of man, is called the Light of nature. Whoever springs forward upon this chearing Beam, will find it expand and enlarge itself on his aspiring Soul, till the brighter Glare of Revelation opens on his astonished Eyes the glorious Gospel Truths; and Life and Immortality in a full enjoyment of the ever blessed God, is at once unfolded and made his own: and thus we may account for the Justice of God's Dealings by all People and Nations, even where Jesus Christ had never been preached: (for there

is no other Salvation, no other name under Heaven whereby Men can be saved but by Jesus Christ.) Have they not therefore heard? 'tis granted they have not. But have they obeyed and followed the Dictates of preventing Grace, or the Light of natural Conscience; have they in Obedience to its Impressions, most earnestly desired to know more and more of the Will of God, in order to their fulfilling of the same? If they have they shall assuredly be taught of God, as the Scripture hath said. If they have, (to apply the Words of our Homily on reading the Scriptures, as quoted from St. *Cbrystom*) it cannot be that they should be left without Help; for either God Almighty will send them some holy Teacher to instruct them, as he did to instruct the Eunuch, a Nobleman of *Æthopia*, and Treasuer to Queen *Candace*: or for Want of a learned or inspired Teacher, God himself from above will give Light unto their Minds, and teach them those Things that be necessary for them, and wherein they be ignorant. Therefore their Condemnation will be just, because they did not make their Advantage of that Light which God had given them, which would have gradually led them to a saving Acquaintance with him through Jesus Christ our Lord: *For whosoever hath, that is, that improveth what he hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more Abundance: but whosoever hath not* (the

(the unprofitable Servant) *From him shall be taken away even that he hath*: in these last the divine Notices grow more and more faint, till they are entirely overwhelmed by their own wilful Darknes. And thus it is that God is vindicated in the Revelation of his Wrath against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men whatsoever, whether Christians, Jews, Turks, Pagans, or Infidels: because, as St. Paul argues, *That which may be known of God, (he is here speaking of the Heathen World) is manifest in them*: for, *God hath shewed it unto them, for the invisible Things of him (even his eternal Power and Godhead) from the Creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, so that they are without Excuse; because that when they knew God, when they knew that he existed, and could not but conclude that he was a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him; instead of seeking him, instead of making Use of this Light to gain a more improved Knowledge of him, they wilfully quenched it, and in consequence thereof, they glorified him not as God neither were thankful, but became vain in their Imaginations, and so their foolish Hearts were darkened: professing themselves to be wise they became fools!* presuming to have an adequate Knowledge of the supreme Being by the force of unassisted Reason, and their own laboured

S E R M O N III.

49

into Christ ? Do not *we* live under the Revelation of the Gospel ? and therefore have not *we* a perfect Knowledge of the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent ?

Men and Brethren, let me freely speak to you. I would to God that every one that hears me this Day *may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the Breadth and Length, and Depth and Height, and to know the Love of Christ which passeth Knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the Fullness of God.* But what shall we say to these Things ? God forbid that I should judge you. Examine your own Hearts, and be yourselves the Judges. The Knowledge of God here spoken of, doth not consist in a mere Notion or Idea, however just, resting inactively in the human Mind. Neither doth it depend on any casual Circumstances, such as, being born in a Christian Country, or educated in the Tenets of any particular Church. It is of infinitely a more exalted Nature. It is an inward invigorating Principle, even the Principle of eternal Life. *This is Life Eternal, saith our blessed Lord, that they may know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* It is therefore such a Knowledge of God as implies the closest Intimacy and Union ; such a saving Acquaintance as is to be established by the Residence and Abiding of the Godhead within us ; as our Saviour hath promised to him that will keep his Words. *John xiv. 23,*

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My Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our Abode with him. This, my dear Brethren, is the great Privilege of Christians ; this is the inestimable Purchase obtained to us thro' the Blood of Christ ; that we should have a vital home-felt Knowledge of God by the Experience of his *Love being shed abroad in our Hearts* by the Holy Ghost given unto us : *the Spirit of God bearing Witness with our Spirit that we are the Children of God.* This and no less than this, can properly be deemed that Knowledge of God which our Saviour calls *Eternal life.*

Have you therefore this blessed Knowledge of God ? this glorious Testimony thus sealed upon your Souls ? can you lay your hands upon your Hearts, and say you know from Experience that your Redeemer liveth ? are your Actions, Words and Thoughts influenced by this inward Guide and Counsellor ? are you conformed to the image of Christ in an Imitation of his Life and Conversation ? if it be so, happy, yea blessed are you ; for you have the Earnest of Eternal Life abiding in you. But if any of you have not these precious Proofs, this illustrious Manifestation of the Spirit of Christ, I shall never hesitate to pronounce, that you have not yet attained to such a Knowledge of God, as is the Spring and Fountain of eternal Life.

For the Advantage therefore of all such who perceive themselves destitute of this free

free intimate Union and Connexion with the Holy Trinity, I shall recommend to them in the second Place earnestly to seek and press after it by such Arguments as are the most likely to engage their assiduous Attentions to this the most important of all Concerns.

And surely when we reflect on the amazing Condescension of Almighty God, in admitting us to this Communion and Fellowship with him thro' the Son, we cannot but be startled at our own indolent Delay in deferring one Moment to close with him by Repentance and Faith in Jesus Christ ; since the irrevocable Promise hath long ago, even in the old Times gone forth, that to such he will in a peculiar Manner be their God, and they shall be his People.

O what an insupportable Load this will be upon your Consciences at the last Day, that the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, the God of *Israel*, the Great *Jehovah*, he that inhabiteth Eternity, whose Throne is the highest Heaven, whose Footstool is the Earth, that He, the Mighty He, hath courageously fought you out: hath excited you by preventing Grace ! hath spoken to you by his Son ! hath promised you a free Pardon for past Sins thro' the Blood of Jesus ! hath even sought an inward intimate Acquaintance with your Souls ! would fain have gathered you together as the Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not ! Ye chose rather an Intimacy with his enemies the

world, and with the Men of the World : you were influenced by their Smiles ; you were terrified by their Threats. He called you and you knew not the Shepherd's Voice : He intreated you to be saved, and you spurned him with Contempt. That ever such gracious Offers had been tendered to you, will then be infinitely more afflicting than if they never had been made. You will then have Cause to lament that ever Christ had died, when his despised Blood crieth out for Vengeance on your self-condemned Souls. As you have *refused* to have a spiritual and experimental Knowledge of him *here*, it will then be his turn to profess "*I know you not ; depart from me ye Workers of Iniquity.*" What will it avail to plead, Lord we were born in a Christian Country ; we were brought up in the Church of *England* ? the Purity of her Doctrines will be but an Aggravation of your Guilt. He will therefore still repeat, "*I have not known you, in that my Spirit had no abiding in you.*"

O insupportable ; O agonizing Thought yet just as terrible ! for he hath stretched out his Hands all Day long to a gainsaying People : He had promised to be found, but you would not seek him. Behold He cometh he cometh with Clouds, and every Eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him ; and all Kindreds of the Earth shall wail because of him. Behold, my Brethren, behold the Day approacheth ; it cannot be far off
ever

every one of us; at least the Hour of our Death is hurrying on; and then no further Room for Repentance will be afforded. Know ye the Lord therefore in this your Day; acquaint yourselves with God; for he is both ready and willing to be known to you. You shall know him even as one Friend knoweth another, not by Name only, but by the warmest Union of Spirit, Mind and Affections.

“Who is the Lord, said Pharoah, that I should obey his voice?” The Tyrant knew not God, because his Heart was hardened. O timely may you prevent the same deplorable Ignorance from the same fatal Cause.

The trembling Gleams of Day exhibit still the skirts of his infolding Glory; but swift the Night cometh on, wherein no Trace is found. O Darkness, dreary and horrible! a Darkness such as may be felt, will then overwhelm your Souls, without one pitying Ray to enlighten and to cheer.

O Light of Life descend, expand o’er all our Hearts: dethrone the Prince of Darkness, and establish within us the Kingdom of thy Peace for ever and ever.

S E R M O N I V.

Salvation by Christ for *Jews* and *Gentiles*.

Act x, 34, 35.

Then Peter open'd his Mouth, and said, of a truth I perceive that God is no Respector of Persons: But in every Nation he that feareth him and worketh Righteousness is accepted of him.

THIS great and glorious Truth was now but just cleared up to the Apostle *Peter*, that God in regard to the gracious Means he afforded of Salvation, had not contracted his blessed Views with respect merely to any particular Nation, or People; but was about to fulfil the Promise made many Ages ago to *Abraham*, that in the holy Seed to be derived from him, all Nations of the Earth should be blessed.

It is worthy Observation, that even to these select and chosen Men for the Propagation of the Gospel of Peace, the Holy Ghost did not at once (in the act of their Endowment with spiritual Gifts and Graces on the Day of *Pentecost*) impart to them the Fulness of di-

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vine Knowledge ; but gradually led them on from one Degree of Light to another, as God saw Occasion for their Furtherance, or beheld them prepared for, and capable of still stronger Food. And this is agreeable to the Form of Expression made use of by our Saviour, in his Promise of sending them the Comforter. *When he, the Spirit of Truth is come he will guide you into all Truth.* Οδογῶντες, the Greek Word, implies such a guidance and Direction to be given, as an ignorant Traveller receives from his Conductor, who leads him Step by Step, till he arrives at his Journey's End.

And thus it was, that not only *Peter*, but every one of the Apostles, laboured a considerable Time under the Jewish national Prejudices, not yet conceiving that God's free Grace and Pardon was universal to the whole fallen Race of *Adam*, that is, to those who earnestly should seek for it by Repentance and Faith. Accordingly we find in the next Chapter, that on *Peter's* coming to *Jerusalem*, they of the Circumcision reproved him for having had any Fellowship with the Gentiles ; till they heard what he had to offer in his Defence ; rehearsing the extraordinary Vision he had been favoured with, and the Conversion and Justification of *Cornelius* and his family through his Ministry : and then they were not only satisfied with *Peter's* Conduct but glorified God, saying, *then hath God*

also to the Gentiles granted Repentance unto Life.

The Conversion of *Cornelius* (who is usually called the first Fruits of the *Gentiles*) was not till about seven Years after the Ascension of our Lord: during which time the Apostles preached the Word only to *Jews*, properly so called; or to those *Gentile* Converts who were admitted to the same Privileges with themselves, I mean the Profelytes of the Covenant (otherwise termed the Profelytes of Righteousness;) who were circumcised and observed all the Rights and Ceremonies of the Jewish Law. Of this latter (it is generally agreed among the learned) was the Eunuch of *Ethiopia*, who went up to *Jerusalem* to worship, and was converted on his Return by *Philip* the Deacon.

But now God was pleased to dissipate that heavy Mist, that contracted the Apostles Prospect, and shew them clearly, that the Partition-Wall was broken down, and that God's Mercy is over all his Works.

“*Of a Truth I perceive,*” says *Peter*, and it was not till now that he discovered it (So that he himself had not fully understood, till now, the Import and Extent of what the holy Spirit had delivered thro’ himself on the Day of *Pentecost*, namely “*Whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved*” I perceive that God is no Respector of Persons. O blessed Hearing! and if God is not partial in the Distribution of his pardoning
Grace

Grace to any particular Church, Sect, or Opinion (not even to those who were peculiarly called his People) why doth the narrow Heart of Man pursue with Malice those who presume to differ from him? but Praise be to God's Holy Name, that his Ways are not like our Ways, "*for in every Nation he that feareth him and worketh Righteousness is accepted of him.*" In the Prosecution of this Discourse, I shall consider

FIRST, what is meant by fearing God and working Righteousness.

SECONDLY, I shall point out the Nature of the Acceptance consequent thereto.

And lastly, I shall conclude with some practical Observations.

I. And first I am to consider what is meant in this Place by fearing God and working Righteousness.

Now the Fear and the Righteousness here spoken of, were neither the one nor the other perfect unto everlasting Life, either in their Nature or Operations. The first not extending further than what the School-Men term the initial Fear of God; or what the *Psalmist* calls "*the beginning of Wisdom:*" and the latter being infinitely short of that glorious Righteousness, which is the Gift of God thro' Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is that Fear and that Righteousness, which co-operating under the preventing Grace of God, lead Men to Repentance, and thro' Repentance make the Object meet on whom

the Seal of the blessed Promise shall be conferred : but it is not yet that Righteousness which is the Fruit of Faith working by Love. For perfect Love, saith St. *John*, casteth out Fear, because Fear hath Torment : He that feareth is not made perfect by Love.

Now that *Cornelius*, who gave Occasion to those Words of St. *Peter*, was not made perfect by love, is very evident ; for the Love of God had not yet been shed abroad in his Heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him ; and yet we find him a Man of singular Probity, Humanity and Morality ; being of good Report, not only in his Neighbourhood, but among all the nations of the *Jews*.

It may be perhaps of Advantage to us, to take a distinct View of the Character of this Man, as it may have the following happy Effects. It may in the first Place perhaps convince some, who consider themselves as Christians, how far short they are even of the imperfect Righteousness of this Person : and it will prove in the second Place, even to the best of us, the absolute Necessity of a Redeemer's Blood.

He was by Birth a *Gentile*, descended from Heathen Parents, and educated of course in Blindness and Idolatry : yet under these great Disadvantages, attentive to the Light that shineth in Darkness, even the Light that lighteth every Man that cometh into the World, commonly called preventing Grace or the Light of natural Conscience : attentive I say,

to the Stirrings of this Heavenly Spark, (instead of quenching it as other heathen Idolators had done) he arrived at the Knowledge of the one true God, who made Heaven and Earth, the Sea, and all Things contained therein. From thence forward he became a devout Man, or, as the original word *Ευσεβης* might be more properly rendered, a right Worshipper : and being zealously concern'd for the Souls of others as well as his own, his Example had a suitable Influence on his whole Family ; for *he feared God with all his House*. And thus it appears that God never left himself without Witness, not only from the visible Things of the Creation, but likewise from the inward Witness, a spiritual Seed of Light, sown in the Soul of every son of Man, *Jew, Turk or Pagan*, as well as *Christian* ; whose kindly Suscitations whoever follows, will gradually perceive increasing Gleams still leading further on to nearer and far brighter Advances, till at length a full and a perfect Day bursts forth upon his ravished eyes. Therefore the idolatrous Heathen is without Excuse ; because, when he might have arrived at a Knowledge of God, he rejected and stifled that small Ray of light that would have gradually led to him : and so his foolish Heart is deservedly darkened ; and God has justly left him to his own vain Imagination, all fruitful as it is of the grossest Absurdities and the most shameful Vices.

On

On the other Hand, behold this industriously inquisitive *Gentile* struggling thro' that foggy Cloud of Education and Prejudice that must have been a heavy Weight and Damp upon him in his Searches after Truth. God however was pleased to forward his Endeavours, and was found of him, not only in regard to his Existence, but in a display of his awful and amazing Attributes. In contemplation of these, *Cornelius* could not but be struck with the profoundest Reverence and with the most piercing self-Abasement. He could not survey the Outskirts of his Glory and Power; he could not consider his Justice and his Holiness, without a firm and settled Conviction, that he was of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity: and that he can have no Fellowship with the Depravity and Corruption of Man. Whenever on the contrary he cast down his Eyes on himself, he saw so much Pollution there, and was conscious of so many and so great Imperfections, even in the best of his Works, that he greatly feared God (whose Justice should he condemn him, he could not but approve of) he feared God with all his House: yet not losing his Hold of God's Goodness, and trusting, that, as he was desirous to do his Will, God would yet instruct him in some Method of Reconcilement; he continued to do such Things as he conceived would be most pleasing to him: he gave much Alms to the People, and prayed to God always.

How

How many are there among us, my Brethren who not having near the amiable and virtuous Dispositions of this *Gentile*, imagine all is pretty well within ; and sit down with an infatuated supineness and careless Indifference, as if they had already reached the Shore whilst they are all afloat in a leaky Vessel, on the Billows of Destruction ! and yet will any one presume to say, that had *Cornelius* died in the present State of his Soul, before *Peter* came to him, he had died in a State of Salvation ? if he had, Christ died in vain ; and our Preaching is vain : There was no absolute Necessity for Christ's Death ; for here was an instance of one who would have been saved without receiving the Benefit of the atoning Blood by Faith. And if *one* could obtain Salvation by other means than by Jesus Christ, why not many thousands more ? on this Supposition, God the Father was lavish of the Blood of his only begotten Son, without a suitable occasion : for here appears a possibility for Man to Work out his Salvation by his own Power, by his own intrinsic Holiness. An Hypothesis so Diametrically opposite to the whole Tenor of the Word of God, that it would infallibly lead us to throw away our Bibles and form a new Religion of our own. But indeed *Cornelius* himself was so far from being satisfied with his present Condition, that it is evident from the Message Delivered by the Angel, he had been earnestly praying to God for further Light and

and Direction, what he ought to do in Order to Salvation. *Thy Prayers and thy Alms*, says the Angel, *are come up for a Memorial before God*. And in Answer to those Prayers, send Men now to *Joppa*, continues he, and call for one *Simon*, whose surname is *Peter*; he Lodgeth with one *Simon* a Tanner, whose House is by the Sea-side. He shall give you Satisfaction in what you Desire to be instructed in. *He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do*. Or (as *St. Peter rehearſes the Matter in the next Chapter*) *he shall tell thee Words whereby thou and all thy House shall be ſaved*. And what can be a ſtronger Conviction than this, that neither *Cornelius* nor his Family were as yet in a ſtate of Salvation?

WHAT ſhall we ſay then to the Righteouſneſs of this Man before his Conversion to Chriſtianity? was it the true, pure, Evangelical Righteouſneſs? certainly no. The moſt that can be ſaid of it, is, that it was a legal or moral Righteouſneſs. Such as it was then, was it ſufficient unto eternal Life? the contrary of this has been fully and clearly proved. And yet we find that it was accepted of God: How then was it accepted? this brings me to the ſecond general Head propoſed, namely to enquire into the nature of this Acceptance.

II. THE Acceptance here intended was not abſolutely final and deciſive. So long as we continue in the Fleſh, we are doubtleſs in a probationary State. And even after *Cornelius* had been endued with the Holy Ghoſt,
had

had he wilfully done Despite to the Spirit of Grace, he might have fallen as deep into Perdition as ever Judas did. The true state of his Case was this. God so far approved of the Advances he had made towards him under the slender Light afforded him; of his earnest Desire of a still nearer and more intimate Acquaintance with him; and of the improvements he had made of the small Talent he had committed to him; that he was now about to entrust him with greater and far better treasures. He was about to *accept* him into Gospel-covenant with himself. He *accepted* him as a proper Object to have Christ preached and offered to him for the Remission of all his past Sins: to have his Eyes opened to receive the Day-spring from on high; which hath visited us, to give Light to them which sit in Darkness and in the Shadow of Death, to guide our Feet into the Way of Peace.

That this is the Import and Extent of this Acceptance is very plain from a Consideration of the Apostle's Conduct. He had been for a long time under a strong Persuasion, that the Jews were the only Covenant People of God; it not having been hitherto revealed to him, that they that are of the *Faith of Abraham*, are the *Children of Abraham*, and not merely those who were his Children according to the Flesh.

And thus, referring to his former Prejudices, when he came into *Cornelius's House*, *ye know* (says he) *how that it is an unlawful thing*

“ Thing for a Man that is a Jew, to keep
 “ Company or come unto one of another
 “ Nation: But God hath shewed me, that I
 “ should not call any Man common or un-
 “ clean,” and then hearing Cornelius’s Rela-
 tion of his Vision, and comparing it with his
 own, he opened his Mouth and said, “ Of a
 “ Truth I perceive that God is no Respector
 “ of Persons: but in every Nation he that
 “ feareth him and worketh Righteousness,
 “ is accepted with him.” In consequence
 therefore of Cornelius’s being thus accepted,
 he preach’d Christ’s Crucifixion and Death,
 as an all-sufficient Atonement for our Sins;
 he preached the same Christ’s Resurrection
 from the Dead for our Justification. Pointing
 him thus out to Cornelius as the Son of God
 with Power, “ To him give all the Prophets
 “ Witness, that thro’ his Name, whosoever
 “ believeth on him shall receive Remis-
 “ sion of his Sins.” And now these Words
 of Salvation being brought near to him, and
 to those of his Family and Friends, whom he
 had gathered together on this Occasion, their
 fervent Hearts were opened effectually to re-
 ceive them; and immediately they were fil-
 led with the Holy Ghost. Neither were they
 only possess’d of the sanctifying Graces of the
 Spirit, but likewise of its extraordinary or
 miraculous Gifts. For they spake with
 Tongues, as well as magnified God.

And here let us leave these happy Persons
 endued with a true and perfect Righteous-
 ness

ness, the Righteousness of Faith working by Love, (not of the Drudgery of Works springing from servile Fear;) and let us proceed in the Third and last Place to make some practical Observations, with which I shall conclude.

III. And first we cannot but admire and adore God's universal Tenderneſs and Pity for every People and Nation under Heaven; in that he willeth not the Death of any ſingle Sinner; but accepteth every one into Goſpel Covenant with him, who feareth him and worketh Righteousneſs, according to the Light imparted to him.

Secondly, it will become us to take Notice, that no Righteousneſs ſhort of that which is by Jeſus Chriſt, can qualify us for a Seat among the bleſt above in the Preſence of him, in whoſe holy Sight the Stars of Heaven are not pure. The Baptiſt being deeply ſenſible how greatly defective his own Righteousneſs was, ſaid to our bleſſed Lord, "*I have need to be baptized of thee; and comeſt thou to me?*"

Thirdly, we may obſerve, and cannot but approve of God's Juſtice in the Condemnation of Heathen Unbelievers. "*For that which may be known of God (ſays the Apoſtle) is manifeſt in them; for God hath ſhewed it unto them*". And tho' the Light by which he hath ſhewed it unto them, be as yet but as a Light ſhining in Darkneſs; yet if they ſuffer themſelves to be led and guided by

by it; if they do not willfully quench it, it will open in clearer and still brighter gleams upon their Souls; and God will accept them into Covenant (as he did the *Gentile Cornelius* who had laboured under the same Difficulties and Darkness as themselves) and will reveal to them, as he did to him, the Lord Jesus Christ! thro' whom alone they can receive Remission of their Sins. Therefore, says the Apostle, they are without Excuse.

— And if God's Justice stands approved in the Condemnation even of those who did not feel after him, and find him by the slender and attenuated Light afforded *them*; what will become of us, my Brethren, or how shall we escape if we neglect such great Salvation? How shall we escape, who live under the Brightness of the Gospel Blaze, under a free and secure Enjoyment of it by *human* as well as divine Establishment; and under the purest and most spiritual Profession of it in the Church of *England*?

O let this Consideration have its due influence upon your Souls to awaken and alarm. And be it remembered that, under the Circumstances of your Birth and Education, whatever Ignorance you may plead, is wilful and obstinate. And tho' God formerly winked at the Times of *Heathen* Ignorance, he now commandeth all Men every where to repent. Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out; when the Times of refreshing shall come from

from the Presence of the Lord. For behold he is at Hand, and his Reward is with him. He will be found of all such as diligently seek him. He will cause the Light of his Countenance to shine upon them, and will tell them Words whereby they shall be saved. Whither shall we go then, but to thee our Saviour and our God, seeing thou hast the Words of everlasting Life, and art able and willing to save to the uttermost all that come to thee? Draw us and we will follow thee, O Shepherd of *Israel*. Constrain us to come in, that thy House may be filled.

S E R M O N

SERMON V.

Man not to be feared, but God.

Luke xii, 4, 5.

I say unto you, my Friends, be not afraid of them that kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you, whom ye shall fear : fear him which after he hath killed, hath Power to cast into Hell: yea, I say unto you, fear him.

COWARDICE is the meanest of all Vices : It has the curse of God upon it, and (when clearly seen) the Scorn of Men. I say, when clearly seen ; for tho' we are Slaves to Sin, we still would fain persuade ourselves and others, we do not *bear about* this loathsome *Badge* of Slavery, so abhorred in our own Imaginations, and so detestable in the Eyes of our Beholders.

It will however be seen in the Prosecution of this Discourse, how much this paultry nasty Quality prevails in the composition of the most blustering among us.

But first, let us take a View of the Scripture I have read to you, by way of Illustration.

They

They are the words of our blessed Lord to his Disciples, by which he meant to instil into them the Principles of true Christian Fortitude, in order to enable them to endure manfully those Conflicts, Trials, Persecutions and Cruelties, which after his Resurrection they were to encounter in the World.

It is observable that whenever our Saviour foretells to his Disciples the calamities and Sufferings that were to befall them for his Sake, he at the same Time cheers them with Words of Comfort, that their Spirits may not faint under the Apprehension of them. Thus in the 16th chapter of St. John, when he tells them, *In the World ye shall have Tribulation*; he prepares them for it, by first assuring them, *In me ye shall have Peace*; and again closes the Sentence, saying, *Be of good Cheer, I have overcome the World*.

Thus in the Passage before us, he condescends to call them his Friends, an appellation so endearing, so refreshing, so inspiring, that Powers and Principalities sink to nothing at the Sound of it; all the Terrors of Devils or wicked Men are not able to stand against it.

O my brethren, could we once be fully assur'd, that the title of Christ's Friends belonged to us, what Patience, what Constancy, what noble Resolutions would it Fire us with! let us not despair, for even this high exalted Honour is yet within our reach. Do but obey his Will, and you have obtained it already.

70 *Man not to be feared, but God.*

ready. *Ye are my Friends, says he, John xv. 14. if ye do whatsoever I command you.* Without this necessary Step, without being reconciled to Christ, without being made his Friends, and receiving the Grace of his Holy Spirit on Repentance and full Purpose of Amendment, we shall be still subject to base cowardly Fears, still agitated, drooping and desponding, under worldly Cares and Anxieties.

It is to his Friends therefore that this Exhortation is addressed; *I say unto you, my Friends, be not afraid of them that kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath Power to cast into Hell: yea I say unto you fear him.*

THE Text contains a negative and a positive Precept; and so is naturally divided into two Parts: I shall make these therefore the chief Heads of my Discourse.

THE negative precept runs thus. Be not afraid of them that kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do.

THE Word *Fear* is an equivocal Term; it hath a good and a bad Sense annexed to it, and this both according to its Motives and its Object. Not to insist further on this, (which is easily conceived by every Body, and is sufficiently plain from the Words of the Text) the Fear here spoken of is evidently a base and servile Fear. It implies that Temper
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of Mind which is more affected by its attachments to self and worldly Considerations, than by any Trust in God or Zeal for his Religion and his Glory. It was this dastardly Principle which, under the weakness of the Flesh, before the Holy Ghost was so largely poured forth upon them, in many instances possessed and shook the Minds even of the Apostles themselves. Thus were they filled with Horror in the Storm at Sea, till our Lord rebuked the Wind and bade the Sea be still: Thus *Peter* when walking on the Waves was well nigh sinking in his Fears: thus he denied his Lord and Master: and thus he and all his Brethren forsook him and fled. But after that the blessed Spirit of God was shed abundantly on them, and on every Individual Believer in that and in all succeeding Ages, a hardier Proof of Fortitude is required in Proportion to the Divine Strength, Power and Comfort afforded us: for now to plead the poor pitiful excuses of human Weakness, is to deny the Power of spiritual Regeneration. Know therefore that if Christ be in you of a Truth, you will not dare to fear what Man can do unto you; but as *St. Paul* tells us in the eighth Chapter of his Epistle to the *Romans*. *He that hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*: Such a one is no Soldier of Christ: He will be sure not to engage in the Christian warfare: he will conceal his Candle under a bushel: he will not let his Light shine forth before

before men. Light did I say? alas! his Soul is full of Darknefs.

In regard to human Affairs and our mutual Concerns, mark only what mean compliances, what fordid Flatteries, what base contradictions, what shocking Crimes this Fear of the World engages us in! how oft do Men sneakingly forsake their dear Friends, instead of gloriously supporting them against a powerful Adversary, even when their Cause is just, for Reasons nastily prudential, for fear of giving umbrage to a superior Party or Interest! what mighty principle is it, think you, inspires the Breast of him we falsely call a Man of Honour? I speak of him who upon every slight Affront will violate the Laws of God, of Nature, and of Man? who savagely seeks the Life of his Fellow-creature; and in order to attain his bloody Purpose, scruples not to risque his own. Fain would he persuade us, that he is influenced by true solid Valour, and refined and delicate Sentiments of Virtue. But away with this delusive Masque; notwithstanding all his Pretences, he is nothing at the Bottom but a rank Coward. Coward to Man and brave to his God. He is afraid of the Reproach of Men; and 'tis this servile Fear that urges him to do a Thing which his Soul abhors, and against the clear Convictions of his Conscience.

Now if the Fear of Man produces these hateful and pernicious Consequences in the ordinary Occurrences of human Life, what total

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ruin would it introduce, should it once be suffered to exist in the Christian Profession ! how ill would the Fear of Man comport with that Religion which was come not to send Peace but a Sword ; which was come to wage War with Men's Passions and worldly Prejudices, and tear up by the Roots those Affections which were planted, as it were, in the very Ground of our corrupt Nature.

WELL therefore hath our Saviour given this Caution to his Disciples, and through them to the Ministers of his Gospel in the first Place ; and to all Christians in general to the End of Time, not to *fear* them that kill the Body, and then have no more that they can do.

THERE is nothing, in Regard to the Goods of this World, so valuable and estimable as Life. If therefore we are charged not to scruple parting with Life itself for Christ's Sake and the Gospel's, much more inexcusable shall we be, if we shrink at the Apprehension of any less grievous Persecution, or dare not encounter the Scoffs, Taunts and revilings of wicked Men, however dignified in Office, or insolent in Wealth.

AND yet tho' we cannot but be convinced of the Truth of all this in Theory, what errant Cowards are the generality of us in the Practice ! How often do we hear the holy Name of God shockingly profaned and insulted, without the least Glow of Resentment, without venting a single Word of Rebuke. Should our Father according to the Flesh be

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lightly

lightly treated or affronted, we should shew some Spark of Fire on the Occasion, the effect of filial Duty and Affection: and shall we have less Veneration and Zeal for the Honour of our Heavenly Father; in whom we live and move and have our Being? how justly applicable in this Case are the Words of our blessed Lord, *He that loveth Father or Mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me.*

BUT further, not only do we endure the *irreligion* of others, but are either afraid or ashamed to make a zealous *Profession* of Religion ourselves. The imputation of Singularity is so dreadful a Chimæra to the Apprehensions of many Men, that they care not even to be thought singularly *good*. It is perhaps to this principally is owing, that a little of the true Spirit of Devotion is to be discerned in our Air and Countenance at the public Worship; but on the contrary an affected Unconcern and Indolence of Behaviour, together with many trifling and unbecoming Indecencies, unsuitable to the dignity of this Place, even to make particular mention of. It is upon this Account that the Character of being a pious Man, is as much avoided as that of a mad Man, and that they may not give the least Occasion for *Suspicion* of that Nature, Men will shun the *Company* of devout Godly Persons, even though they cannot but entertain a Respect and Honour for them in their Hearts: nay, what

worse than this, they will join in profane Conversation : they will repeat lewd Jest : they will laugh at Christian Piety, and speak lightly of the holy Scriptures, that the World may still believe them to be the same gay gallant agreeable Creatures it ever thought them.

AND do men really believe that there is a God that judgeth the Earth ? let not his forbearance of thy Crimes, thy baseness and thy Treachery ; O Man, whosoever thou art, induce thee to despise his Power ; for know, *The goodness of God yet leadeth thee to Repentance.*

If yet the Voice of Reason is not absolutely and irrecoverably pre-engaged on the party of your Passions, let us argue the matter fairly, and consider first, the unreasonable-ness, secondly, the Baseness and Ingratitude of this mean unworthy Principle.

Now can any thing be so unreasonable as to fear a less Evil more than a greater ? can any thing be so egregiously stupid and absurd, as to fear Man, who at the worst can only kill the Body, and at the same Time put at Defiance him who can cast both Body and Soul into Hell ? but then, how much more vain and empty will the Fear of Men appear, when we consider that they are not able to do us the least Prejudice without Permission of the Almighty ? when we consider that there is a Divine Providence, which ruleth over all ; which hath set due Bounds to

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every Thing and every Person that they cannot pass ; who can in a Moment either still the Tempest, or divert it from us and with his favourable Kindness can defend us as with a Shield ? when we reflect that Devils and wicked Men, are but Instruments in God's Hand, either for the Trials and Exercise of our Patience, our Love and Resignation; or to be the Means of his fatherly Visitation and correction for the Coldness and Tepidity of our Spirit ; to afford us Crosses for the subduing of the Flesh, that the Spirit may live and grow in us ? or if perhaps they should be permitted to affect our Lives, for our firm Faith and inviolable Perseverance; our blessed Master proposes by this Means to open to us a far more glorious Entrance into eternal Life, than any we could have fondly promised to ourselves.

BUT further, if the fear of Man is proved to be so void of Reason even where our Lives are at Stake ; how much more Irrational, nay how vile and unworthy of us must it be, in less weighty Circumstances, when no such Danger is to be apprehended ! yet this, alas, is just our case at present. Blessed be God, neither our Lives, nor even our Fortunes are threatned : but on the contrary, the Profession of our holy Religion in its utmost Purity is countenanced by the Laws of the Land, supported under the happiest and most flourishing Government ; and all necessary points of Doctrine to be believed, and practised, are
stated

stated and set forth to us by public Authority. Then in God's Name, what is the Reason that we so seldom hear the main essential Articles of our Church, even those which treat of the very Means of Salvation, pressed and insisted on from our Pulpits? why do we hear nothing of the dismal Effects of original Sin? of the Necessity of divine Grace; of Justification by Faith, and the Vanity of Works done before the Grace of Christ and the Inspiration of his Spirit? why are we to be pestered with Dr. *Clarks* Sermons and Doctor *Clark's* impious Heresy? why is all this, but out of a mean Compliance to the horrid Impiety of the Times? why is all this, but from Fear of engaging and combating the Passions, Prejudices and false Opinions of mankind? and can any thing be so entirely void of Reason, as this vile, abandoned Cowardice, when our Government, our Laws, and the Rules and Articles of our Church are on our Side?

For it cannot be that any Ministers of our Church do really in their Hearts dissent from our Articles of Religion. No surely. That would be so infamously dishonest, so shockingly villainous, to sign Articles against their Consciences, that we ought not to suppose any one *could* be guilty of it.

BUT secondly, let us consider the Ingratitude of this servile Fear.

THERE is nothing more dishonourable or more odious among Men, than an unkind

and injurious Return from those, on whom we have conferred great Benefits and Advantages. To be deserted, slighted and despised by these on any sudden and unhappy Change of Fortune, affords a Sorrow, that hardly knows to be comforted; an inward vital Grief that drinks our very Blood. If therefore this desertion of our Friends, (who can only be bound to us, comparatively speaking, by trivial petty Obligations;) is so inhumane and abhorred, what shall we think of that Man, that can forsake and betray to the Ribaldry and Licentiousness of an abandoned Age the God that made him, protected and redeemed him; who lastly, to Crown all other Gifts with the greatest and best of all gives his very self to him? hear it not, O Heaven! blush, blush, thou earth, groaning under Impiety, and almost ripe for Destruction. 'Tis thus that Man repays his Saviour and his God. Go, thou Slave, that tremblest in thy Fears, and darest not for thy Life, no, nor for thy Soul darest not boldly stand and stem the tide of Vice and Irreligion: thou that art so horribly afraid of the Contempt of the Contemptible; go follow the blessed Jesus* to the high Priest's Palace; mark how he is spitted on, buffeted, smitten and insulted. From thence attend him to the Judgment

Hall

* See that valuable Work entitled *Meditations and Contemplations on the Sufferings of Christ*, by Dr. RAMBACH, 2 Vols. Octavo, which is well worth the perusal of every Christian.

Hall. Behold him arayed in a mock Robe of Honour; a Reed in his Hand, and a Crown of Thorns upon his Head. With what a malicious Pleasure do the Soldiers deride him with, a *Hail, King of the Jews*. Forsaken as he was by his Friends, surrounded by his Enemies, a painful and ignominious Death in his View, did he once Offer to deny his Mission and Character? could he not have brought down Legions of Angels, and easily have removed the bitter Cup from him? but he voluntarily chose to drink it to the very Dregs thereof. He drank it for thee, even for thee, who canst not bear the Scorn of Fools for the Sake of Christ who died to save thee. View him on the painful Cross; listen to the Insults of his Enemies. Hark! in the Agony he Groans. Behold, he expires. Tremendous Mystery, replete with awful Mercy! if the Powers of Heaven and Earth were shaken at this Event, can the Heart of Man remain unmoved? go now, if you have the Heart to do it, go, aid the Hand that pierced your Saviours Side. Go, be ashamed of him; and deny him before Men. Go, and take Pains to avoid being thought a zealous Afferer of inward and vital Christianity, and a Friend and Protector of all true and sincere Followers of the blessed Lamb. Go, but remember, and expect the Reward of your Treachery hereafter. Expect that he in Return will be ashamed of you, when he com-

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eth in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.

O MEN, O Brethren, O Christians, (if the Name belongs to you) assert yourselves and vindicate the Cause of God.

By the precious Blood of Jesus Christ, by the Sufferings and Death of his Apostles and Martyrs; by the immortal Spirits of those just Men made perfect, who in our own Realms, not many Ages past, yielded up their Lives at the Stake in Testimony of the Truth; lastly, by the inestimable Value of your own Souls, let me intreat, let me persuade, let me animate, the Spark of Heaven within your Breasts, to burst the Bands of Fear, and boldly and openly contend for the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God. The Time calls on us to awake, to rouse and stir ourselves. That pure reformed Religion, which our forefathers delivered down to us at the Expence of their own Blood, is struck at by unworthy Men: the Life, the Spirituality of it, is undermined by a dull, sluggish Formality; nay worse, by Heresy and *Arianism*.

MERCIFUL God! whither are we going? let us not despise Christ: let us not despise one of his little ones: let us not pay such a servile Complaisance to vile paltry worldlings: it is unworthy of our Profession: It is dangerous to our Souls: it must in the end be our Perdition. But let us earnestly contend

contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints, and keep our selves in the love of God, looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal Life.

I COME now to the second general Head proposed, but I shall defer it to another Opportunity.

SERMON VI.

Man not to be feared, but God.

Luke xii. 5.

I will forewarn you whom you shall fear ; fear him, which after he hath killed, hath Power to cast into Hell ; yea, I say unto you fear him.

THE Fear of God is here put in Opposition to that mean unworthy Principle, the Fear of Man : against which I endeavoured to caution you when I had last the Honour to address you from this Place, and it is pressed and enforced by our blessed Lord with a peculiar Earnestness by the Repetition in the close of the Verse, *Yea I say unto you, fear him.* And the Reason of this awakening Alarm, is surely evident to every one from the Greatness of the Danger hanging over our Heads.

HAD there been no particular Revelation made of the Immortality of the Soul, and a future State of Rewards and Punishments, yet all we see without us, and all we feel within us, do strongly and powerfully dictate these great and glorious Truths. The
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undue Recompence of Virtue here, and the thriving Opulence of many of the Wicked, call aloud for a Day in another World when all these Matters shall be set right, when every one shall receive according to the Deeds done in the Flesh. For if it were not so, God would not be wise, holy, just and good; at least he could not Regard and take Care of this World, which he had made in such amazing Beauty, Order and Proportion. But if other Testimonies were wanting, the conscious something within our Hearts---nay, 'tis the Divinity that moves within us, that whispers to our Soul, that she shall live hereafter, and all her Glories shall not wither in the Grave.

Now if all Things both in Heaven and Earth conspire to teach us the Dignity of our Nature, and the Eternity of our Existence, our very Reason will suggest to us, that we can be brought into this World of Woe and Wretchedness, only that our Wills may have free Scope here, to fix our own Doom by our deliberate Choice; either to render that Eternity completely *happy* by the Means afforded us, or completely *miserable* by our obstinate Disobedience: and the Apprehensions, these Arguments of natural Reason, so obvious to all Men, are amply confirmed to us in the written Word of God, by Revelations attested in the most satisfactory Manner, and happily delivered down to us in the utmost Purity. What then can be worthy of our Attention,
what

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what of our Hopes, what of our Fears, but those things which will determine our Condition in the World to come? all else are lying Vanities, Children's Play-things, the Fopperies of Fools: and even the lowest Bidder is sure to give above their Value.

If eternal Happiness and eternal Misery are placed before us, our Fears may well be *doubled* on the View; for we are at once in danger of losing the one, and at the same Time of being woeful Partakers of the other. Whenever these are pressed by Conscience upon our Reflections (and sometimes they will affect us in Spite of all our trifling Cares and empty Amusements) we then feel the weight of our Saviour's Admonition, *yea, I say unto you, Fear him.*

THERE is indeed a Fear of God which doth not convey any dreadful Sensation, but hath it's Birth in the Ardor of true Devotion. And this is not the Fear which hath Torment, but is that Fear which is made perfect by Love. But this is peculiarly the Property of those who have made a Progress in the divine Life. It is that delicate Disposition of Mind, which makes us Fear, least in any thing we should offend God, because we *love* him; as the Lover trembles at every Word that has escaped him before the Object of his Passion, least it should not be received with full *Approbation*.

BUT the Fear excited by our Lord in the Text hath a different Source, and consequently a very different Operation on the mind.

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It is that Fear, that Dread, that Horror of Conscience, which seizeth and almost overwhelmeth a Sinner under strong Convictions, when he first sees the Danger of his State, and feels and knows himself to be at Enmity with God, and consequently a Child of Wrath. The Fear we are speaking of is attended indeed with very painful and horrible Sensations, and regards chiefly the more tremendous Attributes of the Deity, such as his Justice and Power. This is called by the Schoolmen the initial Fear of God, and is emphatically stiled by the divine *Psalmist* the beginning of Wisdom. This inward Shock and Perturbation must pass upon the Soul of every returning Sinner more or less, before he can possibly be rendered a proper Object of divine Grace and Mercy. We must go over the Brook *Kedron* and partake of our Lord's Agony in the Garden, before we can expect to say with him, *It is finished*. And this not from any Pleasure God takes in the sufferings of his Creatures, but because this is the only Way possible, in the Nature of things, for the Grace of God to have its full Operation and Effect, in the thorough Change which is to be brought about in the inward Ground of our Hearts.

SINCE therefore every Soul of Man that hath done Evil, must drink of the Dregs of the Cup of trembling, and wring them out, before he can taste of the Well of Life, give me Leave to administer such Motives to this
Fear

fear of God as may sensibly awaken and alarm. And we shall find ample Occasion for this inward Dread and Horror, whether we turn our Minds upwards to the God and Father of us all; or secondly, downwards to that Sink and Stew of Wickedness, the human Heart.

And first let us cast our Minds upwards to the great God and Father of us all. Now every one of the divine Attributes, even the milder and more amiable, cannot but affect us, when deeply weighed and considered, with a stupenduous Awe and very sore Amazement. When we reflect on his Goodness, his Patience, and long Suffering, what Zeal, what Hatred, what Indignation ought it to raise in us against ourselves, who still continue so grievously to offend him? when we contemplate his Holiness, and consider that the Stars are not pure in his Sight; what hopes can we entertain, that such polluted worldly Wretches, as the generality of us are at this Day can meet with a gracious Acceptance at his Hands? as soon can God have Fellowship with *Belial*. Even his Mercy will reflect Terror on the Soul of him, who hath rejected it in the Way which God himself has proposed it: who hath never sought to be justified through the Holy Spirit which Christ purchased with his own Blood; but amusing himself in his conceited Imagination with other Schemes of Salvation, hath suffered the

the eternal Son of God to die for him in vain.

BUT if we carry our Reflections still further, and attend to the Rigour of his Justice, and the Mightiness of his Power; if we find that the one must and will be ever ready to execute the impartial Decrees of the other, all our fond feeble Props will presently fail us, and our Hearts will dissolve within us like melting Wax: If divine Mercy is infinite, so is divine Justice too. Divine Mercy hath *already* shewn itself infinite, in giving us the infinite and eternal Son of God for our Salvation; but if we do not receive him into the Ground of our Souls by Repentance and Faith, and so by the blessed Influence of Christ within us, become holy and acceptable to God, divine Justice remains yet unappeased, and there is no other Sacrifice to be made for us to it; we must reap the Fruits of our own Folly and Wickedness in an Eternity of Hell Torments: and nothing can be more just and worthy of a wise and good God than this, that as the Remedy offered us was infinite and eternal, so the Punishment consequent on our obstinate Refusal of that Remedy, should be likewise eternal and infinite. Let us beware therefore that we do not idly and securely depend on God's Mercy, without any Regard had to the Means that Mercy has held forth to us. For that would be to despise the very attribute, on which we place our Confidence; and let us ever call to Remembrance

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membrance his Justice and his Power, which must coincide with all the rest of his Attributes, the whole God to be reconciled to us, or otherwise our Foundation is sandy and the Superstructure must fall to the Ground.

BUT secondly, in Order to awaken every thought that may apprise us of our dangerous Situation, let us cast our Eyes downwards into ourselves, and consider the present State of our own Souls, and then see what a Condition we are in to appear before this God we have been describing all good, all holy, all powerful and all just.

Now before we enter deeply into the Enquiry we are about to make, let me entreat you to carry these Fundamentals with you as Truths never to be shaken. In the first Place that God never gave a Rule of Righteousness, which he did not expect should be obeyed in every Particular. Secondly, that if Man, notwithstanding his natural Weakness and Corruption, could not by the influence and indwelling of the Holy Spirit attain to universal Obedience to the whole Will of God, the Holy Spirit was given in vain; and Christ died in vain for the Purchase of that blessed Gift.

I WOULD not be understood here to mean, that any Man is made perfect the Instant he is justified. No; far be it from me to advance so bold and presumptuous a Doctrine. We know; we Experience, alas! that the

Canaanites

Canaanites are still in the Land, but then they are so diminished and subdued by our holy *Joshua* or *Jesus*, that if we will but resolutely fight under him, though they may gain some little Advantage over us by Surprise, they will never have the same Power against us as formerly : and if we do but courageously persist without fainting, we shall in the End entirely root them out and destroy them.

THIRDLY, be it remembered that every Text of Scripture is to be understood in the plainest and most obvious Meaning of the Words (unless where such meaning absolutely contradicts the natural Evidence of our Senses) and woe be to him that addeth thereto, or taketh aught therefrom. I mention this on the Account of some, who when a plain Sentence of Scripture is, as one would think, irresistibly strong against their corrupt Affections, Opinions or Prejudices ; are desirous to persuade themselves and others, that the Words are not to be understood in their strict Sense, and by this Delusion wilfully blind themselves and so fall into Perdition.

AND now let me lay before you the written Word of God, that you may compare your Lives and Actions therewith, and judge *yourselves* in due time, that ye may not be judged of the Lord. And O that it may be pressed upon your Hearts and Consciences in its full Tenor and Extent, that ye may not indulge yourselves in a fatal Security by eluding the Force of it.

And

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AND methinks I need not go further to convince you of your present perilous Condition, than by taking a cursory View of our Saviour's divine Sermon on the Mount. Mark only upon whom the Blessings are entailed, and then consider whether they belong to you.

Blessed are the Poor in Spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Now I would fain know of the greater Part here present, whether they really think themselves the Poor in Spirit. Whether idle Mirth and pampered Festivity; whether Card Playing and Dancing, and all Manner of worldly Vanities and Delights, can possibly be reconciled to this Poverty of Spirit.

Blessed are they that mourn: and O that ye did mourn after a godly Manner! Believe me, my dear Brethren, it is from Love I speak, I should rejoice at such Mourning, and I cannot but grieve for your Joy.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the Earth. Hear this, ye Sons and Daughters of Pride; and know that ye shall inherit Hell.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after Righteousness. But where are they? alas, indeed, how few!

Blessed are the merciful: but woe to the Covetous and Selfish.

Blessed are the pure of Heart: but the beastly Impurities, even in *Conversation*, of
many

many in this Place do insult the Forbearance of the Almighty.

Blessed are the Peace-makers : but Shame on the Disturbers of our Peace.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for Righteousness sake : But what alas! will become of the insolent, abusive and malicious Persecutor ?

Our Saviour commands us to *let our Light so shine before Men, that they may see our good Works :* But what says coward Man ? I will conceal my Candle under a Bushel, lest I should seem *particular* in this World of wilful Darkeness, and so be liable to Scorn and Reproach. O excellent Follower of the Cross of Christ !

We are told by our blessed Lord, that *whosoever shall break one of the least of the Commandments, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven,* that is he shall never go there.

Now when I lay open to your View the full Import of the Ten Commandments, I doubt there are too many among you that will be found not to have kept one of them. And shall these enter into the Kingdom of Heaven ? for Example.

We know that God can only properly be served and worshipped with the whole Heart, and the entire Affections thereof ; and therefore whatever a Man places his Affections on, that is his God. He then that has fix'd his Affections, either in whole or in part, on
worldly

worldly Goods, Profit, Pleasure or Preference, hath sinned against the two first Commandments. He hath chosen another God. He hath made himself an Idol. And 'tis on this Account, that *St. Paul* to the *Colossians* calls Covetousness Idolatry.

Whoever mentions the Name of God without an inward and feeling Devotion, has broke the third Commandment.

Thou sayest I keep the Sabbath : but look to the inward Disposition of thy Heart : dost thou therein internally celebrate the true Sabbath ? Dost thou rest from evil Thoughts and wicked Desires ? Is thy Heart entirely devoted to God, and still from the Noise of the Creatures, that God may operate in thee ? If not, thou hast by no means observed the fourth Commandment.

Thou payest an external Obedience to thy Superiors. But art thou subject for Wrath or for Conscience Sake ? actest thou from a Principle of Love, or only out of Fear ? If by this only thou art constrained to an external Compliance, know that thy Obedience is meerely hypocritical, and the fifth Commandment is left yet unperformed.

Thou defilest not thy Hands with Blood and slaughter, and thinkest thou art free from the Crime of Murder. But art thou sure thou entertainest no Hatred, Malice or Ill-Will against any one in thy Heart ? If thou dost, our Lord himself hath pronounced thee a Murderer.

Thou

Thou dost not yield up thy Body to Impurities. But is thy Heart free from every unchaste Idea ? For know, that he that looketh at a Woman to lust after her, hath already committed Adultery with her in his Heart.

Thou art restrained perhaps from stealing or committing Robberies. But dost thou pay thy just and lawful Debts to the utmost of thy Power ? Dost thou never defraud the King or Government of what is due ? Dost thou never in any Way of Dealing endeavour to circumvent and deceive thy Neighbour ? If thou art guilty of any of these Particulars, thou canst not say thou hast kept the eighth Commandment.

In the ninth Commandment are forbid all Slanders, personal Reflections and Abuses ; all little malicious Tales ; all Terms of Reproach and Contempt against any one. And how few are they that have kept themselves entirely free from all these Things, and have not injured any one in Word or Thought ?

Lastly, Art thou sure thou hast never entertained any Envy, any inward Wish or Desire towards the Goods and Properties, or the personal Qualities and Endowments of thy Neighbour ? If thou hast, how wilt thou stand clear of having broke the tenth Commandment ?

Now what shall we say ? will any one deny that these Commandments have this Import and Extent ? Or will any one presume

sume that Christ was not in earnest in what he said concerning the Breach of the least of them ?

Need I go further to convince you of your inward Condemnation ? Shall I repeat our Saviour's Injunctions concerning the Love of our Enemies, to those who pride and boast themselves in a well-executed Revenge ?

Shall I speak of his Direction concerning Prayer, to those who mutter over their Devotions, as if they were ashamed of what they are about ?

When ye fast, says our blessed Lord, *be not as the Hypocrites.* But when is this ? I speak to the greatest Part amongst you, and I speak it to your Shame. When do you fast ? Have you no Occasion for such Mortification ? Are you more pure, more holy, more perfect than the Apostles themselves were ? beware. Let even him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.

Now were these Rules, these Laws, these Commandments given to be observ'd just as far as Men are inclined, and no further ? What reason have you to think so ? What Texts of Scripture can you find that will indulge you in this Latitude ? How will you evade, as I know many are very expert at Evasion, but how will you evade what our Saviour declares concerning the Breach of them ? you will however still go on, and trust at last to God's Mercy, tho' you are provoking

provoking him every Day. 'Tis true, he is as merciful as just, and he is as just as merciful. But where would even the Mercy be, in God's allowing you to abstract your Wills and Affections from him who is the only Center of Happiness : and place them on what is diametrically opposite to this Center of Happiness and consequently from its own Nature must make you miserable, tho' you are so blind that you cannot see your Ruin ?

BUT indeed God is infinitely merciful : and to prove himself so, notwithstanding your manifold Sins and Iniquities, he doth not defer his Mercy till the Day of Judgment.

No, take it now. 'Tis freely offered you. Now is the accepted Time : behold, now is the Day of Salvation, I am commissioned as his Messenger to bring this good News to your Ears ; and in the Name of the crucified Jesus, I offer it you again and again. Only make Use of the Means prescribed, repentance and Faith ; and I pawn my Salvation upon it, you shall Experience the Grace of God upon your Souls. Come, come away, the Marriage Feast is prepared for you. Make no Excuses. All Things are now ready. The Lamb of God lies bleeding on the Table for you. A wedding Garment is offered you ; see that you put it on. At your Peril don't reject it ; else when the Master of the Feast shall discover you in your vile Apparel, what will you say for yourselves ? was it not held forth to you ? You will

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will then be speechless, and shall surely be cast into outer Darkness ; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

What insolence then is this ? what impudent Assurance ? You will not accept God's proffered Mercy at the Time he offers it you and by the means he has appointed. You will not be saved, unless you can be saved your own Way, and at your own Time. You resist, reject and scorn the Holy Ghost, who is ready to render you holy and acceptable unto God. No ; you don't Desire to be made holy : on the contrary, you purpose to continue in your Sins till the Hour of Death ; then perhaps to confess yourselves sorry for your past Life ; and so vainly trust to that Mercy which cannot reach you, because you would not receive it, in the only Way thro' which it could possibly be conveyed.

CONSIDER with yourselves ; for it is not a Matter of slight Importance. God calls upon you by me. He hears me at this Instant speak to you in Obedience to his Commands ; and 'twill be a record against your Souls at the last Day, that the Word was preached to you. He invites you to him. He entreats you to be saved. He opens his Arms to receive you ; and promises to renew you in your Spirits conformable to the Image of his Son. Come ; turn to him this Hour and this Moment ; the next, your Hearts may be hardened thro' the Deceitfulness of Sin. What have you to plead for your delays ?

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are you engaged in family Cares and worldly Business and Attachments? This Plea will never be admitted. Do you think they only who have no Families, no outward Cares or Troubles are expected to be converted unto God? Hear what our Lord himself says, *Luke xiv. 26. If any Man come to me, and hate not his Father and Mother, and Wife and Children, and Brethren and Sisters, yea and his own Life also, he cannot be my Disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his Cross and come after me, cannot be my Disciple.*

What then will become of you, my dear Brethren, unless you repent? what other Saviour, what other Redeemer do you dream of? if you can save yourselves, why did Jesus Christ come down from Heaven? If they who have not the Spirit of Christ are none of his, why do you not endeavour to obtain that blessed Spirit upon the loving Terms proposed. *Ask and you shall have. Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you. For if ye being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children; how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven, give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.*

The Conflict of a Penitent between the Flesh and the Spirit, 'tis true, is very sore and excruciating. But be not dismayed; the sharper the Agony, the sooner 'twill be over; and then you may truly say from the Bottom of

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your Heart, *My Soul doth magnify the Lord,*
and *my Spirit hath rejoiced in God my*
Saviour.

On the other Hand, beware how you impose on yourselves, and stop the Voice of your Consciences, saying, tush the Lord shall not see; neither shall the God of *Jacob* regard it. Be not deceived: God is not mocked. He is neither an absent God, nor a weak one. He will not be put off, baffled nor insulted. His Justice (after Mercy so often offered, so often refused) is inexorable, infinite and eternal.

And *His Wrath is revealed from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men who hold the Truth in Unrighteousness. And if the Righteous shall scarcely be saved, where shall the Ungodly and the Sinners appear? Fear him therefore, who, when he hath killed, hath Power to cast into Hell. Yea, I say unto you fear him."*

S E R M O N

SERMON VII.

For *Good-Friday.*

Man's Salvation completed by the Death
of Christ.

John xix, 30.

It is finished.

THE great Work of Redemption is accomplished : all the Scriptures concerning it are fulfilled : and even the Sufferings of the blessed Jesus are now come to an end. *It is finished.* These are nearly the last Words of our dying Lord. He added only, according to St. *Luke's* Gospel, *Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit*, and when he had so said, he bowed his Head, and gave up the Ghost. The active Part of his Mission and Character he had already performed before this great Event ; as he himself declares, *John* xvii, 4. *I have glorified thee on the Earth, I have finished the Work which thou gavest me to do.* He had given Sight to the Blind and Feet to the Lame. The Lepers had been cleansed : The Deaf had received

ed their Hearing : The dead had been raised up : and the Poor had the Gospel preached unto them. There remained only the passive, the suffering Part to be endured. And when the sharp agonizing Conflict was over, and his pure and spotless Spirit was just about to depart, *It is finished*, says he *Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit.* And so he bowed his Head, in Token of his Submission to the wise and awful Decree of Heaven before the Beginning of the World : He bowed his Head and yielded up the Ghost.

Pause we, my dear Brethren, and let us meditate on this amazing Mystery. Let us present to our inward Reflections the eternal Son of God, crucified, as it were, before our Eyes. *Behold the Man*, said *Pilate*, when he produced him before the enraged Multitude, wearing a Crown of Thorns, and a Purple Robe.

Behold the Man with other Eyes, my Brethren. Behold the God incarnate. Behold that Face which now in Heaven feeds the Saints with Love : Behold it smeared with trickling Blood ; and the tremendous Majesty of Heaven veiled under a Robe of insolent Mockery. Not satisfied with their cruel Scourgings, nor moved with his patient Meekness, that very People, who not a long time before had brought him in Triumph with Hosannas into *Jerusalem*, are now instant with loud Voices, requiring that

that he might be crucified. *And the Voices of them and of the chief Priests prevailed. So Pilate gave Sentence that it should be as they required.* Let us follow him, my Brethren, let Fancy carry us, as it were at a Distance, among the Followers whom Jesus loved; that we may note every particular Circumstance in the close of this shocking Scene, and drink deeply every precious Word that falls from our suffering Lord. When fainting under the Burthen, he could no longer sustain the Weight of his own Cross, one *Simon a Cyrenian* was compelled to bear it for him: and then the melancholy Procession goes on. The Women who had been Witnesses to many of his Maracles, and to his holy Life and Conversation, attend him to the latest Period of it, pouring themselves forth in Tears, and swallowed up in Grief unutterable. And Jesus turning towards them his rueful yet all-lovely Countenance, *Weep not* says he *for me, ye Daughters of Jerusalem; but weep for yourselves and for your Children: for behold the Days are coming, in the which they shall say, blessed are the Barren, and the Wombs that never bare, and the Paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the Mountains, fall on us, and to the Hills cover us: for if they do these Things in a green Tree, what shall be done in the dry?* a proverbial

Expression, frequent among the *Jews*, who compare a good Man to a green Tree, and a bad Man to a dry one. As if he had said, if an innocent Person suffer thus, what will become of the Wicked? of those who are ready for Destruction as dry Wood for the Fire? this was a remarkable Prophecy of the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, which followed in less than half a Century afterwards.

THUS is the great Sacrifice for the Sins of the whole World conducted, till he is brought to a rocky Hill on the west Side of the City, called *Golgotha* and *Calvary*; a kind of Charnel-House, for the City, and Place of Execution. And now they crucify him between two Malefactors; that the Prophecy of *Isaiah* might be accomplished, *He was numbered among the Transgressors*. The first Words he uttered under these afflicting Circumstances, were a gracious Prayer for his Enemies, saying, *Father forgive them for they know not what they do*. And thus did he teach us by his Example, as well as formerly by his Precepts, to *Love our Enemies*; to *bless those that curse us*; to *do good to those that hate us*; and to *pray for those that despitefully use us and persecute us*. But how was this condescending Goodness, this infinite and inconceivable Love repaid? methinks the reviling Speeches and provoking

ing Blasphemies of the Multitude and them that passed by, yet ring in our Ears; wagging their Heads, and crying, *Ab! thou that destroyest the Temple, and buildest it in three Days save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross.* The chief Priests and Rulers entertained him with the like Scoffs, saying *He saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him.* For he said, *I am the Son of God.* The Soldiers who stood to guard him also derided him, and bade him *save himself, if he was the King of the Jews.* Nay one of the crucified Malefactors urged him to save himself and them, if he was the Messiah. But the other Malefactor, being moved with a wonderful Impulse from the preventing grace of God, and immediately closing with it, seriously rebuked him in these Terms, *Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same Condemnation? and we indeed justly; for we receive the due Reward of our Deeds: but this Man hath done nothing amiss.* Then looking upon Jesus with a firm and noble Reliance, he cried, *Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom.* A most superlative and stupendous Faith! to fly for Succour to one in the same miserable Circumstances;

cumstances ; whom all the World had abandoned ; and whom God himself had seemed to have forsaken. And the Success was accordingly triumphant. For our Lord embraced him with the Arms of his Mercy ; and solemnly assured him that, that very Day he should be with him in Heaven. Manifesting hereby his divine Nature in the midst of his Sufferings, in that he still had the *Power* as well as the *Will* to forgive Sins. And now, tho' he was more eminently acting in a public Character, than any Person that ever did, or ever will appear in the World ; yet did he not suffer it entirely to swallow up his private and particular Friendship and Affection, and the Tenderness he had ever paid, and still retained for his afflicted Mother. *When therefore he saw his Mother, and the Disciple whom he loved, standing by ; he saith unto his Mother, Woman, behold thy Son ;* whom henceforward you are to consider as your Son, and be comforted by him in my stead. *Then saith he to the Disciple, that is, to St. John, behold thy Mother.* And from that Hour that Disciple took her unto his own Home. By this he evidently taught us, that the Affection of Nature and of Choice may be innocently cherished and indulged to the latest Gasps, provided they do not shock the Soul in her last Moments, and make

us act in any respect unworthy of our Dignity as immortal Beings.

WHILST these Things were transacted, from the sixth Hour to the ninth, according to the stated Hours of Prayer with the *Jews*, that is, from twelve o'Clock at Noon till three, there was a wonderful Darknes over the Face of the whole Earth. And this great Eclipse of the Sun was so very remarkable, that, (as we are told) *Dionysius* the Areopagite, being in *Egypt*, took Notice of it, and cried out to his Friend *Apollophanes*, *That either God himself suffered or sympathized with the Sufferer*. But the Darkness upon the Minds of Christ's Enemies was so thick, solid and confirmed, that they did not Regard this outward Horror of Nature, nor were in the least affected by it.

ALL this while the Lamb of God was languishing under the most inexpressible Torments; and consuming in the Flames of God's Wrath against the Sins of the whole World: till finding his Soul insufferably oppressed with the Burthen; and all the Powers of Hell upon him, without one pitying Angel to assist, he in a loud and dismal Tone cried *Eloi, Eloi, Lama sabachthani?* that is, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* His Divinity, (says Mr. *Eckard*) at this Time suspending from his Humanity those Comforts with which his Servants in their greatest Sufferings are usually refreshed. Some of those that

were present, perhaps ignorant of the Hebrew Tongue, perhaps out of Mockery and Ridicule said, he calleth for *Elias*. And presently after, our Saviour, in the Agony of his Fever, saying that he thirsted, whilst one held to his Mouth a Spunge dipped in Vinegar on a long Stalk of Hysop, some among them said, Let be, Let us see whether *Elias* will come to save him. Jesus then having tasted the Vinegar, and knowing that now all the Scriptures concerning him were accomplished, even to the Parting of his Garments, and casting Lots upon his Vesture; said, *It is finished*. And then in an audible and exalted Voice, as if collecting his whole expiring Strength, with a glorious and adorable Confidence, he cried, *Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit*. And then, O my Brethren, behold the End, he gently bowed his Head and expired.

Whole Nature sympathized with the God of Nature himself: and a terrible Earth-quake shook her to her utmost Center. The Veil of the Temple was rent in Twain from the Top to the Bottom; plainly shewing that God had forsaken his former peculiar Residence; and that all Things were made common both to *Jew* and *Gentile*: The one individual Christ having died once for the Sins of all. And these dreadful Phænomena so affected a Roman Centurion, and some of those that were with him attending on the Execution, that they feared greatly, saying, certainly this was

a righteous Man. Truly this was the Son of God.

There was one very extraordinary Incident much insisted on by St. *John*; and not only mentioned in his gospel, but likewise hinted at in his first Epistle; and it was this: That when the Soldiers had broke the Legs of the Malefactors in order to dispatch them, and came to Jesus; perceiving that he was already dead, they did not treat him in the same Manner. But one of them pierced his Side with a Spear, and immediately there came forth Blood and Water. And thus did they fulfil two remarkable Scriptures. *A Bone of him shall not be broken.* And again, *They shall look on him whom they have pierced.* It was strange, says a certain Author, seeing he was dead, that Blood should come out; more strange, that Water also; and most strange of all, that Blood should come out immediately at one Time, and yet distinctly. It was pure and true Water, as well as pure and true Blood. But indeed the whole Process of Christ's Sufferings is so full of Wonder, and so full of Horror, that the one can only give Way to the other. And whoever considers every Circumstance attentively, will be apt to join that innocent Part of the Spectators who having beheld what had passed, in deep and silent Sorrow smote their breasts and returned. An Action extremely pathetic and expressive of the profoundest grief. A grief apparently at that Time, without Remedy:
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and therefore beyond a Cure. Their swollen Hearts were big with what they could not utter; and therefore they smote their Breasts and returned.

If the Recital of this dismal Tragedy hath made the like Impression upon you, my Brethren, O stifle not, but rather indulge the Gloom of sacred Mourning. Feed upon your Tears, as on a rich Repast. They are the Dew of Heaven, influencing and dissolving all that is stony about your Hearts; and yielding them up subdued by deep Contrition; and blessedly prepared for a true and sincere Repentance.

PRESENT to yourselves the mangled Body of the holy Jesus; the Marks of the Scourge yet reeking on his Back; his Face all bloody from the Crown of Thorns; his wounded Hands and Side. And if Things inanimate were stirr'd with Horror; if the groaning Earth trembled and shook; and the yawning Grave, gave up its dead; be not still unmoved, more hardned than Stocks or Stones; but partake of the general Convulsion of Nature in inward Bursts of Grief. A Saviour and a God demand this from you. A crucified Saviour and an injured God. But if the doleful Repetition of this tremendous Act hath not Power to shake, hath not Influence to melt you: If in order to rouse we must hollow in your Ears a shocking, dreadful and execrable Truth: Know, sinner, ---- it was thou that slew thy Lord. Base Murderer thou; They Sins have nailed him

him to the Cross. Thy Sins insult his Sufferings. By persisting in those Sins thou crucifiest him afresh every Day and Hour of thy Life; and thus thou makest thyself a party to that horrid Imprecation of the *Jews, His Blood be on us and on our Children.* And every Drop he shed, unless thou speedily repentest, shall lie like leaden Weights on thy convicted Soul, to plunge it deeply down in bottomless Perdition. But if thou art content and desirous to lay thy Sins upon his Cross, and bury thy corrupt Affections in thy Saviour's hallowed Grave, that precious Blood is thine: it no longer crieth against thee to thy Condemnation; but is freely given by the abundant Grace of God, to wash you white as Wool, tho' your Sins had made you red as Scarlet; and *purge your Conscience from dead Works to serve the living God.* This was one great Cause for which Christ came into the World. He came into the World to die for the Sins of it. And by his Death he not only made Atonement for the past, but likewise purchased for us the Gift of the Holy Ghost, to afford us Power and Dominion over them for the future. From henceforth let not the most grievous Sinner despair; for it was Christ that died. From henceforth let not the Self-righteous presume in his own Merit, since so stupendous a Sacrifice was required. In his Life indeed, Christ died continually, disdaining the Pleasures, or even the common Comforts which the World afforded. But in the
last

last fatal Scene of it, he died ten thousand thousand Deaths, bearing the Curse of every Soul's Transgression in his own Body on the Tree. O faithless and perverse Generation, how long, how often will you tear open and grin in Mockery over those blessed Wounds, whose bubbling Lips yet plead with you to have some Pity and Regard to your poor precious Souls? Those Souls he claims as his. He paid down the Price and Redemption for them. Can you refuse to him the Delight he so graciously assumes in making you eternally happy? Unless you repent and believe the Gospel-Promises, you have no Part or Portion in Christ's Blood. Nay he will declare to you that he knows you not. *Depart from me ye that work Iniquity.*

THEREFORE acquaint thyself with God. Acquaint thyself with the blessed Jesus. For if he knows you not in this World, neither will he know you in the World to come. And think you he will have any Fellowship or Acquaintance with an obstinate unrepenting Sinner? Can Purity dwell with Filthiness? or Innocence with Guilt? Does the Lamb feed with the Wolf? or the Dove roost with the Kite? Opposite Natures can never agree. God can have no Fellowship with Belial. Either forego the World, it's Sin, and all it's Trumpery; or else, whether thou wilt or no, thou must forego thy God. These are not flattering Truths, but they are firm, certain and infallible. Take thy Choice, the World

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or God. For thou canst not serve God and Mammon.

AND now, my dear Brethren, as you are about to return to your respective Habitations full of the melancholy Story of our Saviour's Death, suffer not the Impressions it has made to pass lightly over your Minds; but improve them with the utmost Diligence to the Advantage of all your Souls. Do not pass the Remainder of this solemn Day in idle Mirth or worldly Care; but commune with your own Hearts, and in your Chamber, and be still. Fasting, as it delivers the Soul from Part of its gross Incumbrances, is of use, highly to promote serious Meditation and Prayer. And oh! in these holy Exercises (more especially incumbent on you on this Day) forget not your unworthy but loving Minister; and bring down a spiritual Blessing on my Ministry, by your fervent and effectual Prayers for me to the Throne of Grace. And in my Turn I most earnestly intreat the Lord that when we meet together here on Easter-Day, and partake of the precious Symbols of Christ's Body and Blood, we may all feel the Power of his glorious Resurrection.

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SERMON VIII.

On the Resurrection.

Matt. xxviii, 5, 6.

Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified. He is not here ; for he is risen as he said. Come and see the Place where the Lord lay.

IN any interesting Event, endeared to us as the Means of Happiness either to ourselves, or to those whom we tenderly Love, the Mind greedily explores every the minutest Circumstance relating thereto, with an unwearied Application; and feeds on every Thing that gives additional Life to the Idea with inconceivable Delight. It is in this Manner we are apt to be affected with the Angel's Address to the Women who were come to pay their last Offices of Love, Duty and Respect at the Sepulchre of their deceased Lord. *Fear not ye---come, see the Place where the Lord lay.* Our Spirits seem to adopt the Invitation, as if offered to ourselves; and our Imagination is on the Wing to carry us to take a Survey of the hallowed Spot where the Body of Jesus lay. *Fear not ye.* The Angel

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Angel makes a wide Distinction here. He was not in the least concerned to remove the Terrors of the Watch, who for Fear of him did shake, and become as dead Men. No, he knew that they had no Interest in the Lord Jesus. He knew that they were placed there in Opposition to his Disciples; like those malicious Enemies of the Truth, who shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against Men: who neither go in themselves, neither suffer them that are entering to go in. To them and such as them the Words of the Text are not addressed. But ye! O ye that seek Jesus that was crucified, fear not ye. Ye holy Mourners who bedew your Saviour's Tomb with penitential Tears; ye sorrowing Souls who will not be comforted, because he was crucified for your Sins, be strong and of good Hope. The Lord is risen. He is risen indeed, and hath appeared. Nay more, He is risen for your Justification.

THAT every labouring burthened Heart may partake deeply and thoroughly of this blest Occasion of Joy and Triumph, it will be necessary to consider distinctly the several Benefits derived to us from our Lord's Resurrection from the Dead.

AND first, as we observed before, he rose again for our Justification.

Now the Rationale of this Assertion of the Apostle's can only be built upon this Foundation; namely, that we are justified by Faith. Upon any other Hypothesis whatsoever, it will

will always appear far more reasonable and intelligible, that he *died* for our Justification, than that he *rose again* for our Justification. But when we are made to understand, that it is impossible in the Nature of Things that we can reap any Advantages from Christ, unless we apprehend, cleave to, and rest on him with the full and unreserved Recumbency of our Souls, as our only Hope, our only Saviour, our only Means of everlasting Life ! when again it is explain'd to us, that Faith is that Instrument whereby the Soul *doth* thus apprehend, cleave to, and rest upon its Object : we shall presently see in what

Respects our Saviour's Resurrection from the Dead was absolutely necessary to our Justification. It is true that Faith is the Gift of God ; but the Exertion of that Faith, when once given, lieth in *ourselves*. God may give us Wings to fly ; but if we never exert those Wings, we shall still continue to move upon the Ground. Now in a Point of such high Importance, as where a Sinner's eternal Happiness, or eternal Misery is at stake, the Soul will ever be faint and backward ; it will never have the Resolution to *exert* its Faith with its utmost Power, as an Instrument to apprehend, cleave to, and rest securely upon any Object less than God, as its only Hope, its only Saviour, its only means of everlasting Life. Unless therefore Christ is presented to the Sinner as *God over all blessed for ever*, he will never dare to cleave to him with all his

Heart,

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Heart, with all his Soul, with all his Might, and with all his Strength. And every other species of Faith being imperfect and vain, Christ profiteth him nothing.

By the Death of Christ indeed he is presented to the Eye of Faith as an Atonement for the Sins of the whole World : but this Atonement can be appropriated only to those Persons who plead and urge it as their Title to their Pardon. And no one can urge this Plea fervently, powerfully and effectually who does not believe the Atonement fully adequate to the grace to be received ; for this would be magnifying the Attribute of God's *Mercy* at the Expence of his *Justice* ; and would be supposing him to act weakly and inconsistently.

Now the Guilt of every Offence ariseth in Proportion to the Dignity of the Person against whom it is committed. Thus a Blow given to an ordinary Person will be punished by the Law but in a small Degree: but the like Offence given to the Person of a King is high Treason and punishable with Death. In the same manner Sin being an open Rebellion against the will, the Laws, and the Throne of the God of Holiness, Purity, and Love, is in its own Nature just as unholy, unpure, and hateful, as God is holy, pure and lovely. Just as high as Heaven is from Hell, just so low is Hell from Heaven. Till therefore an Atonement could be produced in all respects, as holy, pure, and lovely, as Sin, in
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its being committed against God, was unholy, impure, and hateful, the Justice of God could never be satisfied fully and consistently with itself; and God must have been a weak Being, upon these Terms to pardon Man.

THIS being so thoroughly agreeable to the plainest Dictates of common Sense, no rational Being can with the *full Reliance and Recumbency of his Soul* plead the Atonement of Christ's Blood: (and without this full Reliance and Recumbency of the Soul, I presume the *Arians* themselves will allow that his Plea could not be very moving or prevailing;) I say no rational Being can *thus* plead the Atonement of Christ's Blood as a complete Satisfaction for his Sins, who does not believe him to be as holy, pure and lovely, as Sin, in its being committed against God, is unholy, impure and hateful. And this Character he could never have answered, had he not been God manifest in the Flesh.

He was delivered, says the Apostle *for our Offences*. There the healing Medicine of his Blood was shed and prepared. But unless it could come, so recommended by the Patient, as that which he could fully rely on for an effectual Cure, he would never be induced to take and apply it. And then what would this most excellent Medicine avail? But Christ being manifested to be the Son of God with Power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the Resurrection from the Dead, he thereby

thereby gave all the Stamp, Value and Dignity to the Atonement that the Heart of Man could Desire. And thus he is presented to us as a completely perfect Object, on which the Soul may securely rest by Faith, as on one that is *able to save to the uttermost them that come to him. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*

THUS by his Death the Atonement was made : but by his Resurrection the hidden Value of that Atonement was unveiled and fully proved. And thus was he truly said to have risen again for our Justification ; because he appeared thereby a meet Object for justifying Faith to embrace and rest on, with the full recumbency of the Soul.

It will perhaps be objected on the Side of the *Arians* that Christ's Resurrection from the dead is no proof of his Divinity ; for the Bodies of many Saints were raised from the dead as well as his, and appeared unto many. To this I answer, that *their* Resurrection was by Virtue of the spiritual Efficacy of His ; that they were raised not by any own inherent Energy, but by a Power infused into them : whereas Christ rose again by his own divine Elasticity, as he himself had foretold, *John* x. 17, 18. *I lay down my Life, that I may take it again. I have Power to lay it down, and I have Power to take it again.* And Chap. ii. 19. *Destroy this Temple, and in three Days I will raise it.* The Confirmation
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of this Prophecy by the fact itself was so satisfactory a Proof of his Divinity to the hitherto unbelieving *Thomas*, that he acknowledged him there-upon in the plainest and strongest Terms to be both his Lord and his God. This Apostle knew that our Saviour in his lifetime had declared he would raise his Body by his own Power. He knew that no Being less than God could thus give Life to himself. He likewise very well knew that had Christ arrogated to himself a Power that did not belong to him, God would not have permitted the Event to follow in Confirmation of the Prediction.

THEREFORE when he was once convinced even to the Satisfaction of his Senses, of the Truth of Christ's Resurrection, he had not the least Doubt concerning his Divinity.

THE whole that hath been said may be reduced to this. We are justified only by Faith. Faith operates by wholly cleaving to its Object as to a Saviour unto everlasting Life. Faith will not, dare not, cannot wholly cleave to any Saviour less than God. Christ proved himself to be God by his Resurrection from the dead by his own Power. Therefore Faith can cleave to Christ, and by this Faith we are justified. Thus Christ rose again for our Justification.

A second Benefit deriv'd to us from our Lords Resurrection from the Dead is our Deliverance from the Fear of Death. For
through

through Death he destroyed him that had the Power of Death, that is the Devil, and delivered them, who through Fear of Death were all their Life Time subject to Bondage. Heb. ii. 14, 15.

IN passing through Death he disarmed it of it's sting, and evidenced his victory over it by the Power of his Resurrection, When *Petus* and *Arria* were by the cruel Command of the Emperor obliged to slay themselves, the woman drawing the dagger out of the Wound her own Hands had made, and presenting it to her Husband, said, "*Petus, it is not painfu*". But O! what a far nobler Fortitude is inspired into us from the Example of Christ; "*knowing, that if we die with him, we shall also live with him: that if we are Partakers of his Sufferings, we shall be also of his Glory: that as he hath conquered, so shall we be more then Conquerors thro' Christ that love thus. Even in the sharpest and most trying Conflict he will enable us to say in full Triumph of Faith, "O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory?"*" nay more, we shall have a Desire with *St. Paul*, *to depart and be with Christ; that we may no longer see him through a glass darkly, but Face to Face; that where he is, there we may be, and personally know him, even as we are known of him.*

MANY indeed have submitted to Death with an apparent Constancy and Resolution:
But

but 'tis the Christian only that can triumph over it, and depart in the sweetest Transports of pure and holy Joy.

A third Blessing we obtain from our Saviour's Resurrection from the Dead, is the Assurance of the Resurrection and Glorification of our Bodies in the Day of the Lord.

MAN being composed of Body and Soul, cannot so totally resign himself to the one, as to be void of all Care and Anxiety concerning the other. We could not rest perfectly Satisfied, calm, and at ease, with a partial Redemption of the Soul only; but we should be still deeply concerned, and eagerly solicitous for the final Restoration of the *whole Man* to everlasting Bliss, both of Soul and Body. In order therefore to quiet every fearful Doubt and Apprehension of this nature, our blessed Lord took particular Care, thoroughly to convince his disciples of the Substantiality of his Body after his Resurrection from the Dead. *Behold my Hands and my Feet*, says he, *that it is I my self. Handle me and see, for a Spirit bath not Flesh and Bones, as you see me have*; and as if even this were not satisfactory enough, he called for some Meat, and did eat before them. And this he did, as upon other Accouts, so likewise upon this, because the Resurrection of Christ's Body is the Proof and Assurance, of the Resurrection of our Bodies at the last Day. "*Christ the First-fruits*, says the Apostle to the *Corinthians*, *afterwards they that are Christ's at his Coming*:"

Coming: for now is Christ risen from the Dead, and become the First-fruits of them that slept. And he shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body, according to the Working whereby he is able even to subdue all Things unto himself, Phil. iii. 21. And this is agreeable to what he himself says, John xvii. 21. The Glory which thou hast given me, I have given them. Thus though our Body is sown in Corruption, it is raised in Incorruption: though it is sown in Dishonour, it is raised in Glory. And O how inconceivably great will be the Glory, when we are fashioned like unto his glorious Body! surely, according to the Psalmist, When we wake up after his Likeness, we shall be satisfied with it. Having thus considered the rich and precious Benefits derived to us from the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, give me Leave to apply to you the Angels Invitation. Come, see the Place where the Lord lay.

In the Place where he was crucified, says St. John, there was a Garden, and in the Garden a new Sepulchre, wherein was never Man yet laid. I know not, how the Simplicity of this Description may affect any of you, my Brethren. But for myself, it is apt to infuse into me that reverential Awe, of which the Patriarch Jacob was possessed, when he said, How dreadful is this Place! this is none other than the House of God. This is the Gate of Heaven.

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LET us however assume Courage. *Fear not ye, says the Angel, ye seek Jesus who was crucified. Come, see the Place where the Lord lay.* Behold the Impression his sacred Body made upon the Ground from whence it sprung to Life. And O man, whoever thou art, that continuest still in a Course of Ungodliness and Sin, shall the Body of Christ Jesus, crucified for thy Sins, and raised again for thy Justification, make *no* Impression upon thee? O Earth, Earth, once did the Son of God dwell in thee bodily, not as dead, but living in thee, thro' the Spirit of Holiness. Then didst thou bear his Image and Impression, and wast of more Value than the finest Gold in the Sight of God. But now how art thou fallen and debased!

HUMBLE thyself in the Dust, thou wretched Sinner! O thou that bearest no longer the Image of the Heavenly, but the Image of the Earthly, utter forth thy Complaint with Tears and bitter Cries, that through the abounding Grace of God in Christ Jesus, he may again restore to thee the Image of the Heavenly: that as Christ died and rose again, so thou mayest die unto the Earthly, and rise again unto the Heavenly. For if thou wouldst follow Christ in the Resurrection, thou must follow him likewise in the Crucifixion.

ART thou then willing that this great Thing should be done for thee? art thou really willing that the old Man should be given up, judged and sentenced to be crucified? That
thus

thus Sin being condemned in the Flesh, thou mayest live unto God in the spirit? if thou art, behold a pardon for all past Sins is at hand for thee. There, bring them there, even to the Sepulchre of thy Lord. There shall they lie buried with the Linen Cloaths he cast from off his Body. They shall cling and cleave to thee no more. There also thy silly Prejudices, thy Self-esteem, thy carnal Reasonings and false Opinions, must all be wrapped up together and deposited, like the Napkin that once surrounded his holy Head, never again to be resumed. Thus disengaged from that wherein thou wast held and bound, break forth into Day. Rise, shine; for thy Light is come; and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. On thee the *Sun* of Righteousness ariseth with Healing in his Wings. He healeth all the Diseases of thy Soul. He pardoneth all thy Sins. He blot-teth out all thy Transgressions. He remem-breth thine Iniquities no more. All old Things are done away: behold all things are become new to thee. New Life, new Power, new Principles, Dispositions and Affections. Thus shalt thou put on the new Man, which after God, after the Image of God, is created in Righteousness and true Holiness, *Ephes. iv.* 24. How august, O Heaven-born Child of God, shall be thy Condition, when the God of Purity, Love, Truth and Holiness is imaged forth in thee! when the Keys of thy celestial Origin beam forth in all thy

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Thoughts, Words and Actions! when the World, when even the hard-judging World, convinced at length shall behold thy Light, and glorify thy Father which is in Heaven!

Come then, my Brethren, come, let us seek the Lord. Let us seek Jesus which was crucified. But let us not still seek the Living among the Dead. Let us not expect to find him, till we have renounced all Hopes of Salvation from dead Works. He is to be found only by living Faith; even a Faith that worketh by Love; even a Faith that layeth hold of Christ by the Feet, and worshippeth him. May the God of all Grace and Mercy give you this Faith, and cause it to abound in you, may he strengthen, confirm and establish you, that you may not be moved to and fro by every Wind of Doctrine, but may endure unto the end, in all Patience, Meekness and Perseverance, waiting for the glorious Coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all Praise, Glory, Honour and Dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*

SERMON IX.

Justification by Faith.

Romans iii. 31.

*Do we then make void the Law thro' faith?
God forbid. Yea, we establish the Law.*

THAT fundamental Doctrine of Christianity, Justification by Faith, had nearly the same Objections raised against it in the Days of the Apostle, as are started in these our Times; but perhaps they are now vented with a Deal of additional Acrimony, Malignity and Venom. We need in general therefore only have Recourse to this great Champion for the Truth; whose Arguments are so solid, so absolute and undeniable, in the Defence of it, that nothing but the hardest Obstinacy and the most matchless Assurance will dare to withstand them, when ingenuously considered and forcibly pressed.

I CALL this a fundamental Doctrine, because it treateth of the very Means of Salvation. And surely if any Question is material, where a Soul is anxious for it's Spiritual and eternal Welfare, this is principally so; by what Means Salvation or Justification

tion is to be derived to us. It is therefore incumbent on you, my Brethren, no longer to halt between two Opinions; but to be thoroughly settled and determined in your own Minds, whether Justification is by Works, or by Faith.

HAD I been so unfortunate as to have been a Minister of the Church of *Rome*, I could not have preached Justification by Faith, consistently with my own Integrity, till I had first declared my self to be no longer a Member of her Superstition. But since, blessed be God, I have been called to the Ministry in the purest Church in the World, should I preach what is so diametrically opposite to her Sentiments, as Justification by Works, I should be an infamous Betrayer of those Tenets I had solemnly undertaken to defend.

That Justification by Faith is avowedly the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, I presume I have no occasion now to prove at large to you. The Articles of Religion, contained in the Book of Common Prayer, sufficiently evince the Truth of this Assertion, and they refer you for a fuller Explanation on this Point, to the *Homilies*; which, as well as the Articles, are in the most solemn Manner delivered down to us as containing the Tenets of the Church of *England*, being set forth by the publick Authority of the King, Lords and Commons, and both Houses of Convocation.

IN short these Homilies are so express on our Side of the Question, that our Adversaries seem to wish they were fairly out of the Way. And I cannot but express a suitable Indignation, that these venerable Discourses, left us by the great Reformers of our Church, and sealed even with their own Blood, have been treated by certain Men in the most contemptuous Manner, as the mere Traditions of Men.

To rescue these most valuable Labours from such base Misrepresentations, let me intreat your Indulgence for a few Words.

TRADITIONS of Men, as the Phrase is generally understood, signify certain Positions of mere human Invention, that are neither founded in Scripture, nor can be supported by it. Such were those Traditions, by which, as our Lord told the *Pharisees*, *they made the Commandments of God of none Effect*. Now if it can be urged and proved against the Homilies of the Church of *England*, that their Doctrines are not founded in Scripture, nor can be proved by them, I will declare myself no longer a Member of her Communion. No, my Brethren; 'tis one Thing to affirm; another Thing to prove. And I would to God that our modern Sermons were as well supported by Scripture, as these too much neglected Homilies.

THE Scriptures are indeed the Standard of Truth. And it is the various Ways of interpreting them, that have occasioned the

many Sects and Churches now visible amongst us. If therefore I profess myself a Member of a Church, I mean to declare thereby, that I agree with her in her Interpretations of the Scriptures; and with those Positions or Tenets, which arise out of such Interpretations. I would by no means infer, that the agreeing to the Articles or Homilies of any Church whatsoever, merely as such, is absolutely necessary to *Salvation*: but this I insist on, that it is necessary in order to constitute me a *real*, not a *pretended* Member of that particular Church. And if any Latitude may be allowed in lesser Matters; yet surely none can be admitted in such a fundamental as *the very Means of Salvation*.

THE Deduction, that naturally follows, is, that he that holds Justification by Works, and yet calls himself a Member of the Church of *England*, is a base Impostor.

TRUTH, my Friends, is always consistent with itself in every Respect. And I need only make appear to you the Inconsistencies of our Adversaries, in order to lay bare their Principles.

AND now could it ever have been expected, that the Clamour of Schism would have arisen on their Side? but above all, is it not a most astonishing Thing, that they should lay the Charge to those that preach Justification by Faith? what? are we

we Schismaticks from the Church of *England*, because we preach the fundamental Articles of the Church of *England*? because we preach Justification by Faith; for supporting which Tenet the Church of *England* lies under the Curse of the Church of *Rome*?

If this were a Mass-house, and the Auditors all *Papists*, they would be consistent with themselves, to condemn us as *Heretics*. But if you are sincere Members of the Church of *England*, you will do us Justice in your own Minds, and let the infamous Slander fall where it is justly due.

THE Opposers of our Doctrine know well the Weakness of *their* Cause, and the Strength of *ours*. They know that if ever it should come to a publick Trial, the Church of *England* by her Articles and Homilies would declare strongly in our Favour. And therefore, because they cannot, because they dare not, bring Matters to this open Test, they endeavour by artful Insinuations and general Accusations to affect our Characters, as Preachers of the Gospel, without attempting to bring any Thing to a direct, full and particular Proof, well knowing they would be defeated in their Purpose, and entangled in their own Snare. All the Favour we ask is, that they will appear and openly confront us, that the World may have an Opportunity of judging impartially between us.

To hear them talk so largely in Support of Justification by Works, one would be tempted to think, that they were of all Men the most moral and most holy: that they were possessed of all the blessed Tempers described in the Gospel: and that they walked even as their Master walked here on Earth. For will any Man expect to be justified by the Law of Righteousness, without fulfilling the Law of Righteousness? Now bring their Lives and Conversations to the Gospel Test, and you will find them presently skulking under the Corruption of Nature, and urging *that* in Arrest of Judgment. If therefore they are to be justified by the works of the Law, why don't they fulfil the Righteousness of the Law? If they plead, that from their natural Corruption they *cannot* fulfil the Purity of the Law, it then will follow, that from their natural Corruption they cannot be justified by Works. Let our Adversaries chuse which End of the Argument they please, and they will stand self refuted.

AGAIN, 'tis admirable what *contradictory* Objections they will make to the Preachers of the Truth.

At one Time they will endeavour very gravely to persuade you that we make void the Law of God by Faith, that we trample under Foot the whole Body of Morality; and of Course leave an open Door for every Species of Libertinism and Wickedness to enter

ter in at. In the next Breath they will complain, that we are abundantly too strict in our Lives and Conversations; and that we require too much Strictness in the Lives and Conversations of other Men. If the *first* of these Accusations be true, I presume no one in his Senses will give any Credit to the *latter*: and if the *second*, of course the *former* falls to the Ground. In Effect they are both equally false. For on the one Hand we do not insist on greater strictness than was actually required by Christ and his Apostles: and on the other, we hope to prove in the Sequel of this Discourse, that the Doctrine of Justification by Faith, is so far from making void the Law of God, that it is the only Basis on which it can possibly be established. And in order to this I shall enquire, *first*, what is meant by Justification by Faith. *Secondly*, I mean to demonstrate that the Law is thereby established.

I. Now the Doctrine of Justification by Faith is founded upon Ruins. It presupposes the fallen, miserable, corrupt state of Man; to whom a holy, just, and good Law is given, which he hath neither the Inclination nor the Ability to fulfil. What then must be the Consequence? unless a suitable Remedy be found out, either Man must be subject to everlasting Condemnation; or the Law of God must fall into Contempt. And to suppose that God hath given us a Law of Righteousness without ever expecting it should

should be exactly fulfilled, would be raising an Argument against the *Wisdom*, as well as *Holiness* of God : but what says our Saviour, *Matthew* v, 18, 19? *Verily I say unto you, till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot or one Tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all shall be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least Commandments, and shall teach Men so, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven.* What says *St. James*? *Whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one Point, he is guilty of all.* What says *St. Paul*? *Without Holiness no one shall see the Lord.* And this is self-evident from the Reason of Things. For even if an unholy Person could see the Lord, what Fellowship or Enjoyment could he have with him, from whom he so essentially differed in Temper and Affections?

But further, the Law of God is not only holy, just and good; but it is likewise highly reasonable. Let us break it as often as we will, we cannot but approve of it in our sober Judgments. Moreover the fulfilling this holy Law must make us infinitely happy in ourselves; because the fulfilling of it is the Perfection of our Nature. And what can be so great a Happiness to any Creature as the Perfection of his Nature?

And yet notwithstanding all these Persuatives, Man continues an utter Rebel to the Law of God.

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Now in this Case, what would you prescribe to a Being of infinite Justice, as well as infinite Mercy? would you have him bestow the Joys of Heaven on a Creature wallowing in the Corruption of his Nature? I am persuaded your Reason is at once shocked at the Thought of it. No, the Nature of the Disease points out the Nature of the Remedy. The Creature worketh nothing but Corruption, because its Nature is Corrupt: instil a divine Principle into the very Ground of its Soul, which shall Triumph over this Corruption, and the blessed Fruits will presently follow. This will effect an inward thorough Change in his Mind and Affections. In his natural State he doeth that which is Evil, because his Affections are Evil, he loveth that which is Evil. No one would commit Sin, if he did not love it. Moreover he loveth the World, and the Things of the World: therefore according to St. *John*, *The Love of the Father is not in him*. And why can't we love the World and the Father too? why, St. *James* plainly tells us the Reason; namely, *That the World is at enmity with God. He therefore that is the Friend of the World is the Enemy of God*.

In his spiritual State, (by a Parity of Reasoning) being regenerate, or born again of the Spirit of God, having his affections changed and become holy, he of course exerciseth himself in pious and holy Works; because it is natural for every Creature to follow the present Bent of its Affections. You

You see then clearly that our Redemption by Christ Jesus must be a present Thing. It is a Redemption not merely from eternal Hell-Fire, to begin to take place at the Day of Judgment : But it is a Redemption from our present natural State of Corruption, which is the *Source* and *Fountain* of everlasting Hell-Fire.

THIS Redemption is completed in the thorough Sanctification of our Natures; which is a progressive Work, taking place immediately from the Act of Justification, which must precede and be the procuring Cause of it. Be it remembred however, I do not speak of any precedence in regard of Time, but only of Order. For it is one Act of the Spirit of God on the Soul, whereby our Justification is completed, and our Sanctification begun.

God must be always found consistent with himself. Every Attribute must receive its ample due. Infinite Justice must be fully satisfied, before infinite Mercy can be displayed.

BEFORE ever we can receive the Spirit of Holiness, as an inward moving Principle, by which we gain an absolute Power over Sin; so that, tho' it exist, it shall never any longer Reign in our mortal Bodies : I say, before this Blessedness is derived to us, the past contracted Guilt of our corrupted Natures must be done away, and we must be delivered from the Condemnation to which

we were thereby become subject. The Temple must be swept clean, before it can be a proper Habitation for so divine a Guest. This properly speaking is Justification. It is an Operation of the Holy Ghost on the Soul of Man, whereby God's Grace or Pardon is sealed and assured to him, and that for the sake of the Atonement made in Christ's Blood, not for his own Works or Deservings. In effect therefore we are justified by Christ. Christ is the Object. Faith is the Medium by which we apprehend the Object.

By justifying Faith I understand something infinitely higher than a bare Assent or Consent to any System or Set of Notions, be they ever so orthodox, resting inactively in the human Mind. The Faith we are speaking of, is not exercised concerning Opinions, Sects, Parties or Churches. I do not moreover mean either a dead or a devilish Faith, which bringeth forth either evil Works, or no good Works, and is therefore condemned by *St. Paul* and *St. James*. For (as our Church tells us in her Homily on Salvation, Part III.) "The Devils know and believe
 " that Christ was born of a Virgin ; that he
 " fasted forty Days and forty Nights without
 " Meat and Drink ; that he wrought all kind
 " of Maracles, declaring himself the very God.
 " They believe also that Christ for our Sakes
 " suffered a most painful Death to redeem us
 " from everlasting Death ; and that he rose
 " again

“ again from Death the third Day. They be-
 “ believe that he ascended into Heaven ; and
 “ that he sitteth on the right Hand of the Fa-
 “ ther ; and at the last End of this World
 “ shall come again and judge both the quick
 “ and the dead. These Articles of our Faith
 “ the Devils believe ; and also they believe
 “ all Things that be written in the new and
 “ old Testament to be true : and yet for all
 “ this Faith they be but Devils, remaining
 “ still in their damnable Estate, lacking the
 “ very true Christian Faith” — she then
 “ proceeds, the right and true Christian
 “ Faith is, not only to believe that holy Scrip-
 “ ture and all the aforesaid Articles of our
 “ Faith are true, but also to have a sure Trust
 “ and Confidence in Gods merciful Promises
 “ to be saved from everlasting Damnation by
 “ Christ: whereof doth follow a loving Heart
 “ to obey his Commandments.” And a
 little lower she defines “ a Man’s true Faith
 “ to be a sure Trust and Confidence in God,
 “ that by the Merits of Christ his Sins are
 “ forgiven, and he reconciled to the Favour
 “ of God.”

By being justified therefore we understand
 the being pardoned by God for Christ’s
 sake : and by justifying Faith we mean that
 Trust and Confidence, Reliance and Assurance,
 whereby we *know* we are thus pardoned;
 whereby we *know* that we are reconciled unto
 God, and can assure our Hearts before him.

Faith (says the Apostle to the Hebrews

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xi. 1) *is the Substance of Things hoped for, the Evidence of things not seen.*" It is *substantial*. It is not shadowy, or doubtful. It is the *Substance* of present Salvation from the Guilt and Power of Sin, which assures our Hopes of eternal Salvation. *It is the Evidence of Things not seen*; whereby we have a Glimpse of the eternal Weight of Glory reserved for us in the Heavens, in the *present* Foretaste most graciously vouchsafed to us. And this Evidence being cleared up to us by a real internal Preception, we are enabled to yield a good Testimony, and to set to our Seal, that the Promises of God are *aye* and *amen*. Thus it is that the Spirit of God beareth Witness with our Spirits that we are the Children of God, *Rom. viii. 16.* Now if we are the Children of God, we are no longer the Children of Wrath. We are passed from Death unto Life; having received the Atonement. And how can our Spirits bear *Witness* with the Spirit of God, that this Grace and Blessedness is come upon us, if we have no certain Perception of it? would the Evidence of any Man be taken in a Court of Judicature in Relation to a Thing, of which he had no Knowledge or Assurance?

REASON and common Sense, my Brethren, as well as Scripture cry out loudly, *These things are so.*

It remains then upon the whole, that Justification by Faith implies *A sure Trust and Confidence a Man hath in God, that by the Merits*

Merits of Christ his Sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the Favour of God. From henceforth he is born again, or regenerated of the Spirit of God : a Birth of spiritual and divine Affections is wrought in him, triumphing over the carnal sensual Mind, and instead of the Love of the World and the Things of the World, which heretofore prevailed in him, the Love of God is shed abroad in his Heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him.

I come now in the second Place to prove that upon this Basis, and this only, the Law of God can possibly be established. *Love* (says the Apostle) *is the fulfilling of the Law, Rom. xiii. 10. Quis Legem det Amantibus?* is an antient saying? who would prescribe a Law to Lovers? what absolute Necessity does there seem to be of enjoining a Lover to follow the Bent of his *Inclination* in gratifying the Object of his Affection? hath he not a far more powerful Motive, than a mere Sense of Duty urging him in every Act of Complacency to the beloved Person? and are not these sweet Fruits of Love infinitely more valuable than the same Acts proceeding from a servile Principle? the Lover prevents with the utmost Diligence every Thought and every Wish of his Beloved : and till he has ceased to Love, he cannot cease to desire to please : much less would he disobey any positive Injunction, when agreeable to Reason and approved by Conscience. And if a poor mean

earthly

earthly Love so utterly incapable to fill the vast Capacities of an immortal Soul) can be productive of many sweet and endearing Acts, to what a Grandeur and Nobility of Soul must we be exalted, what a thorough Righteousness must necessarily ensue, when our Affections are all wound up in God ?

He that hath my Commandments and keepeth them (says our Saviour) he it is that loveth me. The keeping the Commandments is the Proof of the indwelling Principle of divine Love ; without which the Commandments could not be acceptably fulfilled. *For though I give all my Goods to feed the Poor, and though I give my Body to be burned, and have not (ἀγαπῶ) love, it profiteth me nothing.*

All the Works in the World are but dead in the Sight of God, unless they be the necessary Emanations of the Spirit of Love operating on the Heart and Mind. Now the Effects that issue thence are sweetly set forth by the Apostle to the *Corinthians*. *Love suffereth long and is kind : Love envieth not : Love vaunteth not itself : is not puffed up ; doth not behave itself unseemly ; seeketh not her own ; is not easily provoked ; thinketh no evil ; rejoiceth not in Iniquity ; but rejoiceth in the Truth ; beareth all Things ; believeth all Things ; hopeth all Things ; endureth all Things.*

Thus Love is the fulfilling of the Law : and in order to prove that by *Faith* the Law

is

is established, we need only demonstrate that Faith is the only Root from which this Tree of Life can proceed.

I must again remind you, that by Faith I mean what the Church of England means, “ a sure Trust and Confidence a Man hath “ in God, that by the Merits of Christ his “ Sins are forgiven him, and he reconciled “ to the Favour of God.”

Where there is no Confidence, there can be no real and sincere Love; and where there is no Reconciliation there can be no Confidence. *We love him* (says St. John) *because he first loved us.* We must first be convinced that he loveth us, before we can possibly love him: and we can't be convinced that he loveth us, before we are convinced that we are justified or pardoned by the Grace of God. For surely we must be Objects of his Mercy, before we are Objects of his Love. We must be quite clear that we are not the Children of Wrath, before we can rejoice in the Liberty of the Children of God. I presume it is a Point not to be contested, that a Child of *Wrath* can never love God, any more than the Devils and evil Spirits can love God. A man therefore must have some certain Knowledge what State his poor Soul is in, that if he is a Child of Wrath he may repent and wrestle much with God in Prayer, that for the sake of Christ he may become a Child of Grace: and if on the other Hand he is already Partaker of that Blessed-

ness

ness, 'tis necessary he should be assured of it, that he may be delivered from that Torment and Anguish of Mind, and give Praise and Glory to God. Without this Assurance, Love cannot exist; for where there is no Assurance there is at best but Doubt: and what is Doubt but a Mixture of Hope and Fear? Now St. *John* expressly says, *There is no Fear in Love: but perfect Love casteth out Fear, because Fear hath Torment. He that feareth, is not made perfect in Love.*

He therefore that hath no Assurance, either feareth, or else he is a hardened, insensible Wretch; in either of which Cases he is not possessed of this holy Love; and of course though he should give all his Goods to the Poor, and his Body to be burned, it did not proceed from this divine Principle; and therefore it would Profit him nothing.

LOVE then can only grow upon this Faith, this Trust or Assurance of God's Mercy, unattainable by Man, but by the free Gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. And surely no one will imagine, that such a Faith as we have described, can be *still* and lifeless. No, it is necessarily productive of good works. Or, as admirably defined by St. *Paul*, it is a Faith that worketh by Love. Thus faith is the Root: Love is the Tree: good Works are the Fruits, with which the various Branches of this blessed Tree are naturally laden.

HAVING thus explained to you in the first Place, what we mean by justifying Faith, and

and demonstrated that on this, and this Ground only, the Law of Righteousness can possibly be established, I will just give a short answer to a little pert Objection, that is very apt to come in our Way, and so conclude.

It is very common for a Man to urge, *I was justified and regenerated in Baptism: and therefore I need not be justified now.* To such a one I would put the Question, do you fulfil the Law of Righteousness? They that are born of God do not commit Sin. When they commit actual, wilful Sin, they are no longer the Children of God. By regeneration we have Power over Sin. Have you now that Power? if you have, never presume to plead the Corruption of Nature; for you have a Power given you over that Corruption. If you find yourself obliged to have Recourse to that Plea, be assured you are fallen from whatever Grace you received in baptism, and must again be justified and regenerated by the Spirit of God; or infallibly you must perish everlastingly.

To conclude. On this fundamental Rock of Justification by Faith what a glorious Fabrick lifts up its Head! the Law hath no longer any Demands against us; for Christ is the End of the Law for Righteousness to them that believe. The Accuser of the faithful's Mouth is stopped. *It is Christ that died; yea that is risen again. Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ? O what an elastic Spring doth this angelic Love impress*
upon

upon the sublimer Faculties of the Soul! Our Feet are set at Liberty; no longer fettered under the Law. And thus we run with Ease and Pleasure the Way of God's Commandments.

LIBERTY, my Brethren, is the true Ground of real, solid Piety. When we are free from every slavish Fear: free from the Fear of Death; to which, till we have received the Faith, all our Lives long we are held in Bondage: free from the Fear of Hell; knowing *That there is no Condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.* Therefore Christianity is called *The perfect Law of Liberty.* For what can be more free than for a Man to follow the direct Bent of his Affections, refined and purified by the Spirit of Holiness. This and this only is to worship God in Spirit and in Truth. God grant, my dear Brethren, that every one of you may be admitted into this glorious Liberty of the Children of God: that you may serve the Lord *without Fear*, in Righteousness and Holiness before him all the Days of your Lives.

S E R-

SERMON X.

On the new Birth.

John iii. 5.

Jesus answered, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

WE find in the Person of *Nicodemus*, a Man inquisitive after Truth, and open to Information. And indeed it is very uncommon for one of his high Station and Dignity, (being a Member of the grand *Sanhedrim*, and an Expounder of the Law) to be even thus far removed from Pride, Prejudice and Self-Conceit, to condescend to be instructed by a Teacher, in all outward Appearances, so mean in Birth, and void of Education.

WE cannot, however, but take Notice of that base and ignoble Fear of the World, which withheld him from openly professing himself a Disciple; and which occasioned him to take Advantage, under the Shelter of the Night, to pay his Visit to our blessed Lord, the true Light that shineth in Darkness.

He

HE begins the Discourse with the fair and frank Acknowledgement, that our Saviour's Miracles had fully overpowered and confuted all that the Malice of his Enemies could suggest against him. For as there is no such thing as arguing against plain matter of Fact; and as it was evident to every one, that God would not suffer a continued Succession of Miracles to be wrought with such illustrious and infallible Success in support of an Imposture; it could not but be conceded by every unprejudiced Judge, that at least he was a Teacher commissioned from God. For no Man, says he, can do these Miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

OUR Saviour, finding him thus ingenuously disposed, advances a Proposition in a few Words, which contains the Necessity, End and Design of Christianity. *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.*

THIS being a hard Saying in the Ears of the learned *Rabbi*, who could by no means comprehend its spiritual Meaning, nor yet conceive, how, or to what Purpose it should be accomplished literally in a carnal Sense of the Words, he saith unto our Lord, *How can a Man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his Mother's Womb and be born?*

To correct therefore and raise his groveling Thoughts, and to point them to a more exalted spiritual View of Things, the blest Instruc-

tor answered, *Verily, Verily I say unto thee, except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*

By being born of Water, is generally understood to be meant outward Baptism, or, as our Catechism has it, *An outward and visible Sign of an inward and spiritual Grace.*

I shall not at present enlarge upon the Design of God in the Institution of this Sacrament; but shall rather beg leave to dwell, in the further Progress of this Discourse, upon the thing signified; namely, spiritual Regeneration. And first I propose to consider what is meant by being born of the Spirit. And secondly I shall point out by what Means this spiritual Birth is to be obtained.

And first, I am to consider what is meant by being born of the Spirit, the End and Necessity of it.

WE must make one general Observation, That wherever the spiritual Birth is mentioned in the sacred Writings, it is opposed to fleshly Generation. The one being derived to us from corrupt and fallen Parents, can produce nothing but Dispositions, Passions and Affections, agreeable to its vile, earthly, sensual Origin.

THE other descending upon us immediately from the eternal Spring and Fountain of Purity, Love, and Holiness, absorbs and swallows up these taint Worms of the Soul, (as *Moses's Rod transformed, devoured the Ser-*

pents

pents of the *Egyptian Sorcerers*,) and affords us *new Desires, new Affections* and Inclinations, proportioned to the august Dignity of our immortal Nature; as bringing into our Souls the very Image of our Heavenly Father; that being conformed unto his Likeness, we may be intitled to the illustrious Privilege of being owned as his adopted Sons.

AGREEABLY to this our Saviour argues, *That which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh. And can the Ethiopian change his Skin or the Leopard his Spots?* when this can be effected by the Power of any Creature over its own Nature, *Then may ye*, says the Prophet, *do good, that are accustomed to do evil*, No. That which is begotten will always closely resemble that which begetteth. That which is born of the Flesh therefore cannot but be carnal still, till a new and superior Birth from Heaven overpowers and takes Place of it.

ON the other Hand, that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit; is purely spiritual, and therefore conformed to the Will of God; because its Parent is the Holy Spirit of God, which knoweth the Mind of the Father, being essentially united with him in the Godhead.

Now *The Flesh and the Spirit*, says St. Paul, *are contrary the one to the other*. And being contrary they cannot both lead us to one and the same Point. The one therefore will infallibly lead us to everlasting Happiness

ness, and the other to perpetual Misery. They are as directly opposite as Light and Darknes : Life and Death. *For if you live after the Flesh* (that is, after the Desires of the Flesh) *ye shall die*, fatally, finally, eternally: *but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the Deeds of the Flesh, ye shall live.* Ye shall live to Righteousness; and through Righteousness to Glory, Bliss and never fading Joy.

It appears then, that in our carnal or natural State, we are born with those Appetites and Desires, the very Gratification of which must make us miserable. For if ye live after the Flesh, ye shall die. And since a Man cannot be made happy, in the Possession of any good, unless he hath a Desire and Affection for that good, it follows that he can be in no Capacity for Happiness, till the Desires he is born with, are subdued and eradicated; and a new Birth of Desires, even spiritual and holy Affections is accomplished in his inmost Soul.

WHAT is meant therefore by spiritual regeneration is such a total and entire Change of the Mind and Will of Man, as, of his own Power over himself, he could never have effected; and is derived to him from the inward Operations of the Holy Ghost. "Such is
" the Power of the Holy Ghost, says our
" *Homily*, to regenerate Men, and, as it
" were, to bring them forth anew, so that
" they shall be nothing like the Men that they
" were before." Thus the haughty Person
shall

shall become humble; the passionate shall become meek; the Drunkard shall become temperate; the Libertine shall become chaste; and the Swearer and Prophaner of God's holy Name shall never mention him but with the profoundest Reverence, and never think of him but with hallowed Love. It doth not consist in a mere outward Reformation of Morals. It entereth deeper to the renewal of the inward hidden Man of the Heart. It doth not content itself with lopping off a few Branches of the evil Tree, but at once layeth the Ax to the very Root of it; and in process of Time totally weeds away the few remaining Fibres. Thus so soon as the old *Adam* is expelled with Shame, the Door of our Hearts is opened, and Christ enters in to be our Guest. He cometh, the blessed Visitant, he cometh, and bringeth the whole Kingdom of God into our Souls. He bringeth Righteousness and Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost.

"Thus let Heaven seize us. All at once we're fir'd;
 "Not touch'd but wrapt; not waken'd but inspir'd."

We are then entered into a new State of Things, and, as it were, into a new World; for every thing that surrounds us wears a new Face and Appearance. The former Objects of our Pursuit, Labour and Care are now become tasteless and insipid to us. The World and all its Votaries pass by us unenvied and unheeded. We seek those for our Intimates, who are the most despised among Men, yet the dearest to

Christ. The Play-things of Children and the Gewgaws of Vanity are of equal Value with us. We say of, *intemperate*, Laughter it is Madness. And of, *idle*, Mirth, what doth it profit? and we endeavour to accord ourselves to the Monition of *St. Paul*, that whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we may do all things to the Glory of God. We yield him up ourselves, our Souls and Bodies as a lively and an acceptable Sacrifice; and thenceforward commence to worship him in Spirit and in Truth. We *then first* learn to serve him in the only Manner truly worthy of him; because our Service then is perfect Freedom. Ask an enlightened Person, why he stands wholly abstracted from the Pleasures and Enjoyments of the World; and he will tell you, it is because he hates the World and the Things of the World. Question him again, why (in the Language of *St. Paul*) he prayeth without ceasing; and his Answer will be, that he finds a singular Comfort, Satisfaction and Happiness therein; not moved to it by a slavish Dread of Punishment, but by that perfect Love which casteth out Fear.

If you enquire how it happens, that he thus runs Counter to the Generality of Mankind; he will inform you, it is because a Change has been brought about in his Affections by the Spirit of God; that he now follows the Bent of his *Inclinations*, as much as the most abandoned Libertine; but that those

Inclinations

Inclinations have happily received a right and blessed Direction.

What is the Reason on the other Hand, that the natural Man is dead to the Things of God, and alive and eager after the Things of the World? is it not evident that he hath no Relish for the first, and a raging Appetite after the other? he therefore seeks not that for which he has no Relish, and he earnestly pursues that to which he has so keen an Appetite. See then the Necessity, End and Design of the spiritual Birth: it is to implant and supply to him what is wanting in his Nature: it is to impress upon him a Zeal and ardour for that which alone can make him happy; and to give him a Hatred and Abhorrence for that World, which is deceiving him into Misery. And without this (says our Saviour) he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: and this is easily accounted for: because till he has a new Birth of Desires formed within him, he cannot possibly have any Taste for those Joys which constitute a Heaven; and therefore Heaven itself would not be Heaven to the natural Man. Thus have I briefly endeavoured to explain to you what is meant by being born of the Spirit; namely, that it is such a total Change of Man's Will and Affections, as nothing less than the Power of God could accomplish.

Now the Fact is undeniably certain, that there is such a Thing as the spiritual Birth actually attainable; it not only being assured

to us abundantly in the holy Scriptures, but likewise (blessed be God) being evidenced at this Day, by the Experience of many faithful Christians. But if any one not satisfied with this, is curiously inquisitive, *how*, or in what *manner* the Spirit of God operateth in the Soul of Man; this is a Question not necessary to be known, and as impossible to be described by us, as the Nature, Origin and particular manner of acting of the Wind.

LEAVING therefore all foolish and unprofitable Questions which engender Strife, let us proceed in the *second Place* to enquire by what Means this spiritual Birth may be obtained.

II. I FIND these to be two. First, outward Means or abiding with Diligence in the Ordinances of the Lord. Secondly, inward Means or a thorough Preparation of the Heart by Repentance and Faith. It is on the inward Means I purpose wholly to insist. Now by Faith in this Place, I do not understand that sure Trust and Confidence which a Man that is justified already hath in God, that his Sins are forgiven him, and he reconciled to the Favour of God; even that which St. *Paul* calls the *full Assurance of Faith*. No. This can only follow after, or rather accompany Justification. But I am only speaking of that lower kind of Faith, which necessarily precedes our Justification; namely, a firm Persuasion and Belief, that *Justification*, or an experienced Pardon for past Sins and (in Consequence of Justification)

Justification) spiritual Regeneration, or a Birth of new, holy, heavenly Desires are actually attainable to the Soul, through the propitiating Merits of Christ's Blood, ratified and assured to us in the Gospel Promises ; and that those Promises are stedfast, invariable and everlasting. This was the chief Subject upon which our Saviour dwelt, when he first set out in his solemn Ministry, saying, *Repent ye and believe the Gospel.* And by a little Attention to the Nature of true Repentance, we shall presently discover how excellently this Species of Faith is adapted to come in to its Relief.

REPENTANCE rises from a deep and severe Conviction, not only of the many grievous Sins we have committed, but likewise of our slavish Attachment and Bondage to Sin : it sheweth us the original Corruptions of the very Ground of our Affections, which carrieth us on with such a Propensity to Vice and Wickedness, that tho' God should pass an Act of Grace *to Day* for all we have already committed, yet were we left to ourselves, we should undoubtedly follow the Multitude to do evil *to Morrow.* The penitent seeth the utter Impossibility of pleasing God by any own Power ; and cryeth out in the Words of the *Psalmist*, *Behold, I was shapen in Wickedness, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me. But lo, thou requirest Truth in the inward Parts.* 'Tis not sufficient that I am an honest, good kind of a Man, as the

World goes. 'Tis not enough that I abstain from any *outward gross* Appearance of Sin, but I must not entertain the least Affection and Desire for it. I must be pure, holy and undefiled in the inner Man, or else I must be for ever excluded from God's Favour and his Love. But how, alas! can I ever hope to accomplish this, when my very Nature has marked me for a Child of Wrath?

HERE then Faith springs out of the Ground which he had watered with his penitential Tears: it puts forth the tender Bud of Hope which by the Breath of God will quickly open into the full blown Rose of *S Sharon*,

FAITH teacheth him that God hath provided an ample and suitable remedy to the Demands and Cries of his oppressed Soul. He consults the sacred Pages and finds there, that the same God, who had so strictly required Truth in the inward Parts, shall make him to understand Wisdom secretly. *He shall purge thee with Hyssop, and thou shalt be clean; he shall wash thee, and thou shalt be whiter than Snow.* He shall wash thee, O thou poor Sinner, in the atoning Blood of the Lamb, and so shalt thou appear comely and lovely in his Eyes. *He will be merciful to thy Unrighteousness and thy Sins, and will remember thine Iniquities no more.* And this not on Account of any Plea of Merit in thy Self; but he will be merciful, because he will be merciful. The Price of thy Redemption is paid down by Christ

Christ the Saviour; and the Act of Grace is gone forth, that, *By him all that believe are justified.* Thus purified and adorned as a Bride for the Bride-groom, the Holy Immanuel shall dwell with thee and in thee. Thou shalt become the Temple of the blessed Trinity, a vessel sanctified and prepared to Honour: and the Lord thy God shall be thy Guide and Counsellor: he shall controul every evil Thought, and inspire every pious Motion: he shall moreover continually hold thee up, that the Enemy may never be able to pluck thee out of his Hand.

These and such spiritual Truths as these, when prest by Faith upon the Penitent, revive his drooping Heart, and wing forward his emboldened Prayers up to the Throne of Grace. He demands the rich Benefits of Christ's Blood, as his Right, crying from his Heart, *Lord, Lord, I believe.* He must not, cannot, will not, be refused what God hath bound himself by an Oath to perform. And he entereth the Kingdom of Heaven as it were, by Violence, and maketh it his own. The Spirit of God and of Glory not only falleth, but *resteth* upon him; and he at once becomes the new-born Child of Grace, in earnest of his being an adopted Heir of Glory. O my Brethren, how unmeasurable is the Mercy! how precious the Price! how inestimable the Purchase derived to us! so that as many of us as *will*, of all Sects, Denominations and Parties; as many of us as are *willing,*

willing, inwardly and vitally to receive the blessed Jesus; to all is offered and to them is given, not merely a Possibility, but the Privilege to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name. Is it then any longer a hard Saying, that except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God; when the same Person that pronounces it, hath declared, *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out?* Come then, come to him, my Brethren. Come the most grievous Sinner, as well as the least. You will in no wise be cast out. Come, repent and believe; and the Birth of Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost, shall speedily be effected in your regenerate Hearts. For the Promise is unconfined, as it is great. It is made to you and to your Children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And lo, he calleth now. He calleth you by his faithful Ministers, (unworthy as I am of this blest Commission) he calleth you by me. How long, O wretched Wanderers, how long shall we lift up our Voice amongst you? he that hath Ears to hear, let him hear.

Thou must be born again, O son of *Adam*. Thy Father's Image maketh thee hideous; and thy Mother's Blood is yet upon thee. Unless the Lord saith unto thee in thy Blood, *Live*, thou art condemned already; and everlasting Death must be thy Portion. Come then, confess thy Filth, and cry aloud for
Pity.

Pity. Lift up thy feeble Hands and weep and wail; for the Corruption of thy Nature hath eaten even into thy Soul. O who shall make thee clean, thou Leper from thy Birth; for every thing thou touchest is polluted by thee? stand forth. Utter thy Voice. Cry aloud in the Streets, unclean, unclean, unclean! that Jesus the everlasting High-priest may have Compassion on thy Misery, and heal thy Sores. The Pollutions of thy Birth shall be washed all away; and thou shalt be created anew unto a lively Hope in Christ Jesus, being purified from the Filthineis of the Flesh, that thou mayest walk in Newness of Spirit, having crucified the old Man with all its Affections and Lusts, that the new Man may be raised up in thee, accompanied with new Affections, pure, holy, heavenly Desires, that so God in Christ may be the Desire of thine Eyes and the Delight of thy Soul.

AND now, my Brethren, what shall we say? that *the Children are come to the Birth, and that there is no Strength to bring forth?* nay, but the Mighty one of *Israel* is our Strength. The Lord himself is our Helper. If the Children therefore are not brought forth, it is because they are not yet come to the Birth. They are ever drawing back unto Perdition, having loved Darknes rather than Light, because their Deeds are evil. O then put away your evil Deeds from you, and come to the Light, that you may no longer be the
Sons

Sons of Darkneſs but Children of the
Light, Heirs of God and Joint-Heirs with
Chriſt; to whom with the Father and the
Holy Ghoſt be aſcribed, as is moſt due,
all Praise, Might, Maſteſty and Dominion,
both now and for evermore.

S E R-

SERMON XI.

On right Hearing.

John viii. 47.

He that is of God, beareth God's Words: ye therefore bear them not, because ye are not of God.

A Ready, modest, and humble Attention is a necessary Part of good Breeding: and, believe me, wherever you meet with a true and sincere Follower of the Lamb, you will be sure to find there a well-bred Person. Nay a good Christian hath essentially that, of which good Breeding is but a Shadow. For if good Breeding is but artificial good Nature, artificial Humility, and artificial Love; Christianity is the very Substance of all these, and that in the highest Degree of which a Creature is capable. As Christianity calls us back to the Innocence and Simplicity of Children, so it enjoins to us their tractable Tempers and their teachable Dispositions; and it is upon this Account that St. James exhorts us to be *swift to hear, slow to speak*. Even Nature seems to have

have taught us the same Lesson, by giving us two Ears and but one Mouth; the Ears always open, and the Mouth generally shut.

I cannot doubt, my dear Brethren, of your Candour and your Patience, in lending me your favourable Attention, however unskilful I may be in the Management of the great Arguments I have in Hand. But as this bare Attention is far from being all implied in the Words of the Text, so it will be worth our while to consider them in their full Import and Extent. — First therefore I shall enquire what is here meant by hearing God's Words: and secondly, I shall advert to the Reason, why many hear them not; namely, because they are not of God.

FIRST then I am to enquire what is meant by hearing God's Words.

THE Greek Verb which we translate to *hear*, doth likewise signify to obey; and perhaps it might be as properly rendered, *obeyeth God's Word*, in the passage before us. It is plain however, that our Saviour meant an obedient and effectual Hearing; not an empty superficial one; which even his Enemies afforded him, who endeavoured to lay hold of something whereby they might accuse him.

THE different ways or Degrees of hearing the Word of God are most admirably set forth in our Lord's Explanation of the Parable of the Sower, and as possibly the Application

cation of it may come home to the Hearts of many here present for Reproof and Conviction; I will read to you the whole Passage, as we find it in the thirteenth Chapter of St. Matthew, the eighteenth and the following Verses. *Hear ye therefore the Parable (or the Explanation of the Parable) of the Sower. When any one heareth the Word of the Kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the Wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his Heart: this is he which received Seed by the Way-side. But he that received the Seed into stony Places, the same is he that beareth the word, and anon with Joy receiveth it: yet hath he not Root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when Tribulation or Persecution ariseth, because of the Word, by and by he is offended. He also that received Seed among the Thorns, is he that beareth the Word; and the Cares of this World, and the Deceitfulness of Riches choke the Word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received Seed into the good Ground, is he that beareth the Word, and beareth Fruit, and bringeth forth some an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty. These last, and these only can be called true, sincere and effectual Hearers of the Word; and they hear it, because they are of God. They find therein the hidden Manna, the Bread of Life, the glorious and immortal Food of all the Saints. These are they who hunger and thirst after Righteousness; and therefore they*

they shall be filled. And it is to these that Christ particularly addresseth himself, when he saith, *he that hath Ears to hear, let him hear.* 'Tis not the Jingle of Words, the Flowers of Rhetoric, or poetic Flights that will satisfy these; their Souls are athirst for the living God; and they expect to be led forth to the Rivers of *Judah*. A curious little hashed up Essay may perhaps amuse the Imagination, but they must be the deep Things of God, it must be the Sword of the Spirit that penetrates the Soul. They that are of God, they that are already justified by his Grace, or at least are in a State of Repentance, they have not only an Ear, but likewise a Heart for these Things. They do not let the Word pass by them like a Shadow on the Wall; they meditate on it, when they lie down and when they rise up; they talk of it, when they sit in the House, and when they walk by the Way; they urge it to all whom they can prevail on to receive it, and so bring forth Fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty, and some thirty, that is according to their respective Abilities and Opportunities.

How many on the contrary are there, who come to Church perhaps out of Curiosity, or at most out of Regard to Custom, Decency, and the Opinion of the Publick; who have neither Feeling of their perilous Condition, nor Desire of Instruction. They have however the good Manners indeed to listen; the
Seed

Seed is thrown out to them, but 'tis thrown on the Way-side, and the Devil immediately cometh and snatcheth it out of their Hearts. Others there are, who though they have heard and approved the Word, yet having no Depth of Earth, they endured but for a Time; the Seed was sown in stony Places; the scorching Sun consumed it; the burning Rage of wicked Men against the true Followers of Jesus Christ, nay something even less than this, the Fear of a little Abuse, of hard Names, of being thought particular, of disobliging those Enemies of God, the Worldlings, presently caused it to wither away, and they retain only the Marks of it's having been sown, for their future Condemnation. There are others again, who tho' they can plead nothing against the Truth, yet have a great deal to say for their not embracing it with their whole Hearts, on Account of their worldly Business and family Cares; these Thorns they cultivate, cherish and improve, till they choke the Seed, and so render it unfruitful; as if Christ had exempted those from taking up their Cross daily and following him; from renouncing the *World* and all its Poms and Vanities, the *Flesh* and all it's Affections and Inclinations, and the Wiles and Temptations of *Satan* whose Power is so evident in both the other two. Had not many of the Apostles, and infinite Numbers of the primitive Christian's Families? inform yourselves of their Lives and Manners, and go
and

and do ye likewise. Does not God love Holiness as much in this Age, as he did in that? and therefore does he not vouchsafe the same *Power* of Holiness now as then? is not there the same Holy Ghost now as formerly? and was not the Promise made to you and to your Children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call? fired with an honest and lively Zeal and Indignation, I cannot but cry out with the Martyr *Stephen*, *ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in Heart and Ears, ye do always resist the holy Ghost.*

'Tis not then the *unfruitful* Hearer, but the Doer of the Word that is meant by our Saviour in the Text; he that heareth the Word of God, and keepeth it, that abideth in it, and is not to be shaken by all the Powers of Earth or Hell. Such a one shall know of the Doctrine whether it be of God, because he is earnestly desirous to do his Will.

BUT secondly, let us advert to the Reason, why many do not effectually hear God's Words; namely, because they are not of God.

II. Now it will be proper in this Place to consider what where the particular Words or Doctrines to which our Saviour's Opposers had been so dull of Hearing. We find in this and in the preceding Chapter, that about the Midst of the Week for celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles (one of the three great Feasts
of

of the Jews) he had come to *Jerusalem* and taught several Days openly in the Temple, asserting his Mission and Character, as the expected Messiah, the Saviour of the World: particularly on the last Day of the Feast, at which there was always the greatest Concourse of People, he held forth to them the grand Gospel Covenant, which was about to be established in his own Blood, to wit, *Salvation by Faith* through the Gift of the Holy Ghost; as we find it in the seventh Chapter of *St. John's Gospel*, 37th and the following Verses; *In the last Day, that great Day of the Feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying; if any Man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his Belly shall flow Rivers of living Water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)* And this glorious Doctrine, so much the Object of polite Ridicule in this our enlightened Age, was much better received even in that Season of Darkness; for it immediately follows, that many of the People, when they heard this Saying, said, of a Truth this is the Prophet, imagining probably that he was the expected Fore-runner of the Messiah. But others of them went further still, and said, this is the Christ. Again, the next Day, as we are informed in the 8th Chapter, he returned to the Temple, and

and (after he had dismissed the Woman taken in Adultery) he affirms himself to be the Light of the World, Ver. 12. *I am the Light of the World: he that followeth me, shall not walk in Darknes, but shall have the Light of Life.* Intimating that they who do not follow him (that is, that do not follow him in the Regeneration, as in *Matt.* the sixth Chapter 28th Verse) are in Darknes, and so will continue. In his further Discourse, with them, he urges frequently his divine Mission, earnestly pressing them to receive the sublime Truths he proposed to them; and represents to them their miserable Bondage to Sin, and their dreadful Condition as Children of the Devil; and gives that as a Reason, why they remained uninfluenced by the Truth: *He that is of God, beareth God's Words: ye therefore hear them not; because ye are not of God.* The unbelieving Jews were so provoked at this last Sentence, that they called him a Samaritan, and said he had a Devil. But in the close of this eighth Chapter, when he asserted his divine and eternal Existence, as the great I AM, without beginning and without End; *before Abraham was, I AM*, their Rage was wrought up to so violent a Pitch, concluding and indeed with good Reason, that this was affirming himself to be the blessed and eternal God, that they took up Stones to cast at him, the usual Death of any one deemed guilty of Blasphemy. But our Saviour, to confirm what he had al-
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leged, by a Proof of his divine Power, miraculously conveyed himself through the Midst of them.

UPON the whole then we may observe, that the Doctrines our Saviour inculcated during the much crouded Feast of Tabernacles, were the grand Points on which our Salvation entirely depends, and are as follows; the Doctrine of original Sin which had brought Men into Bondage, insomuch that they were become the Servants of Sin, and continually aggregated the Heap of it; and so they might properly be said to be in Darknes, being blinded by the Prince of this World, that they might not see their own Ruin, which they were pursuing with all Greediness. At the same Time therefore that he alarms them with the Horror of their present State, he offers them all that they stood in need of; he promises to free them from this *spiritual Bondage*; *ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free.* And he points to himself as the heavenly Light, to bring them out of their *spiritual Darknes*; *I am the Light of the World: he that followeth me, shall not walk in Darknes, but shall have the Light of Life.* And this is the Doctrine of Salvation by Jesus Christ. But as Men would be apt to enquire, how or in what Manner are we to be saved by Jesus Christ? he had informed them already in the 7th Chapter, how this was to be done; namely, by his Spirit

Spirit being received into their Souls thro' *Faith*, and so becoming a lively moving Principle within them, to the Dethroning all natural corrupt Affections, and the very Power of Sin, and the promoting all Manner of Holiness and Godliness of living. *If any Man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his Belly shall flow Rivers of living Water.* And this spake he of the Spirit, (which divine Spirit is sometimes called the Holy Ghost, sometimes the Spirit of God. and sometimes the Spirit of Christ.) This is the Doctrine of *Salvation by Faith*.----But something further was to be taught yet. For unless Men are convinced, that Christ is over all, God blessed for ever, they can never receive the Doctrine of spiritual Justification, and of Sanctification consequent thereto. If he is not, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, the one supreme God, he is something less than this; and being less, he must be a Creature, for there is no Medium. And can we ever believe that a Creature, or the Spirit of a Creature, can be the Spring and Fountain of divine Grace and Life, and be as it were a kind of universal Soul to the whole Christian Church, and to every sincere Member of it? can the Spirit of a Creature make such close Application to our Minds, know our Thoughts, set Bounds to our Passions, inspire us with new Affections and Desires, and

and be more intimate to us than we are to our selves; if a Creature be the only Instrument and Principle of Grace, we shall soon be tempted either to deny the Grace of God, or to make it only an *external* Thing, and entertain very mean Conceits of it. To obviate therefore all Difficulties of this Nature, Christ affirmed himself to be the I AM; the same Title by which, many hundred years before, God made himself known to *Moses* from the fiery bush. This then is that Doctrine, so essential to Salvation! the Doctrine of the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

AND now, if we consider the Tendency of these Doctrines, we shall presently see the Reasons why corrupt human Nature is so apt to revolt against them.

THE very first Principle that shews itself in debased fallen Man is inordinate Self-Love. From hence ariseth Pride and a very high Conceit of his own Abilities, his own Attainments, and his own Virtue and Goodness. Set therefore before him the miserable Effects of original Sin, which hath polluted the very Ground of his Soul, and is the first Cause why he has such strong Inclinations to what is evil: inform him that he is born with the Filthiness of a Swine, the Lasciviousness of a Goat, the Greediness of a Dog, the Cruelty of a Wolf, and the Cunning of a Fox; and how will he be reconciled to these dismal Truths? tell him that he is in thick Darkness, and blinded by the Prince of this World;

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that

that his Actions shun the Light, and not the Fairest of them all will bear the strict Examination of the Searcher of all Hearts; and what will his Reply be? will he not make Answer, that he stands very well in the Eye of the World; that he neither robs nor defrauds any one; that he goes to Church, and repeats Prayers there; and as to the innocent Pleasures of Life, he sees no Harm in indulging himself in them? go then and learn what that meaneth, *He that taketh not up his Cross and followeth me, cannot be my Disciple.* He therefore that *knoweth* not himself to be in Darkness, how great must *his* Darkness be! He doth not feel the heavy Want of Light, and therefore doth he not come to the Light, and unless he cometh to it under a deep Sense of his own Blindness and Misery, he cannot possibly be benefited by it. The Doctrine therefore of Salvation by Jesus Christ, will be received in *his* Ears, like sounding Brass or a tinkling Cymbal.

But further; what a Stumbling-block and Rock of Offence must the Manner how we are saved by Jesus Christ, or the Doctrine of Salvation by Faith, be to the natural Man? *For the natural Man, says St. Paul, receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God; for they are Foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* What an Absurdity will it appear to the carnal Mind, that Christians are the Temples of the Holy Ghost? that every sincere and faithful

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faithful Penitent shall receive God's pardoning Grace within his Soul, and feel and know that the Burthen of his Sins is removed? that the Spirit of God shall bear Witness with his Spirit that he is the Child of God; and from thenceforward shall dwell in him, unless he quench this divine Spirit, and shall continually move, influence, and advance him in the Ways of Holiness? how inconceivable, I say, is all this to the carnal Mind? He will by no means receive it. He will ever kick against the Pricks. He will reject Proof upon Proof, and Scripture upon Scripture. And though he has not the least plausible Argument left to support him, he will still roundly and impudently cry out, that he knows there is no such Thing. And what is the Reason of this Obstinacy? why consider only what the Spirit of God is to effect for him. It is to divest him of all the Desires and Appetites of the Flesh. But he is not in the least inclined that this should be done for him. For in the Gratification of these Appetites and Desires, his Whole of Happiness consists. It is to teach him to renounce the World with all it's Poms and Vanities, and take up the Cross of Christ; but the Love of the first is as dear to him as his own Soul, and the other is too heavy for him to bear. It is to initiate him into the divine Life, that by Degrees all his Affections may be hid in Christ, and regarding this World as the Dung under his Feet, he may aspire in

holy Breathings after the heavenly *Jerusalem*. But the natural Man having no Sort of Taste or Relish for these celestial Delights, is not willing to have such a Change brought about in him. He cannot any way be convinced that Holiness is Happiness, and therefore he requires to be left to seek for Happiness in the empty Shadows of sublunary Goods. Vain therefore is it to urge the Word of God to such a one; for it is a sealed Book to him. Vain is it to apply even to his Reason, for his Reason is betrayed and sold to his corrupt Passions and Inclinations.

BUT lastly, what an humbling Doctrine to the Pride of human Reason is that of the Divinity of Jesus Christ! and this is the Cause why many do actually reject it. What! more Persons than one in the Godhead; again, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost all equally God! three Persons and but one God! shall that gigantick Faculty, that hath made such probable Guesſes at the heavenly Bodies, and hath, as it were, measured the illustrious Canopy above our Heads, shall it submit to this or any Mystery as above it's Reach, and therefore not to be fully comprehended by it? no, says human Pride; let it disdain so poor a Humility. Let the Doctrine rather, in Spite of Scripture, be rejected. Thus we see in every Instance, why many do not effectually hear God's Words: it is because they are not of God. They are not therefore concerned for God's Honour. They are not
anxious

anxious for their future Welfare. They act in all Things as if they were to live *here* eternally; and they are only open to receive those Doctrines which will flatter them most in their wordly Prejudices.

To conclude, my dear Brethren, it is a Question of the utmost importance, that your Hearts should faithfully answer to you whether you are of God, or not. If the Word of God makes a strong Impression on your Minds, entering deep to the Conviction of your Souls, with a feeling Horror of your sinful State, it is at least a very promising Sign, that you are not far from the Kingdom of God. If on the other Hand you remain callous and insensible, neither influenced by the Gospel-promises, nor alarmed and terrified by God's approaching Vengeance, you are in the very Gall of Bitterness and Bond of Iniquity. I attest those immortal and invisible Spirits, that are here joining us in our hallowed Worship: I attest the blessed Cherubim and Seraphim, that continually hymn before the Throne of God, with the profoundest and most awful Reverence. I call on the supreme Majesty of Heaven himself, to bear Witness between me and you at the last Day, that I have faithfully delivered you the Truth, as it is in Christ Jesus. Your Blood be on your own Heads. I am free. And better had it been you had never heard the Truth, than having heard it, to remain uninfluenced in your Lives and Conversations. For tho'

indeed you cannot be saved without observing strictly the Terms proposed, yet there will be different *Degrees* of Misery, as well as different *Degrees* of Bliss. For we are told in the 23d Chapter of *Matthew*, and in other places, of some that shall receive greater Damnation than others.

May God Almighty give every one here present, not only a listening Ear, but likewise an obedient Heart, that they may receive with Meekness the ingrafted Word, which is able to save their Souls.

ADVERTISEMENT,

THE Author flatters himself, he shall stand excused to the candid Reader, for having omitted the Sermon on the Ministry of the Gospel, which stood the second in the former Edition, as he perceived it had given Offence to some, whose Judgment always will have Weight with him. Some Passages in it have been deemed a little too mystical, and some Expressions not sufficiently guarded. Without much Hesitation therefore, he has supplied the Place of it with the following Sermon, which, he humbly hopes, will be less liable to Censure.

SERMON XII.

Rest to the Heavy-laden.

Matth. xi. 28.

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest.

ONE great Disadvantage that Christianity lies under, and which perhaps is a chief Reason of the slow Progress it makes amongst us, is the disgustful Manner in which it is inculcated, and the unpleasing Point of View in which it is presented. It is far oftener treated as a *Law*, than as a *Privilege*; as that which is to lay a weighty Restraint upon the Will, than that which is to set the Heart at Liberty.

WHEN we are young, our Governors usually administer Religion with the same coercive Hand that they give us Physic; they, as it were, hold our Noses, and cram it down our Throats, without suffering us to examine whether the Draught be sweet or bitter.

IF our Disposition by Nature were less averse to the Law of God than it really is, or less at

Enmity with God himself; methinks such a Procedure as this would ill recommend the Law or excite an affectionate Devotion to the Deity. Nay, the Consequence is sufficiently apparent. Nature bridled, but not subdued, pants to be free from the servile Institutions of Childhood, that it may fix it's own Boundaries, and leave itself enough of Room and Enlargement; and thus, whilst it boasts it's *Liberty*, it becomes the Slave of Licentiousness. As the Youth advances in Life, his Misery encreases; remorse of the past, impatient of the present, and a gloomy, and horrible Prospect of a future State of Things embitter every Hour, render Life distasteful, and the Approach of Death dreadful.

WERE a contrary Conduct to be adopted in the religious Education of Youth, and the Instruction of the Ignorant, we might reasonably hope for better Success. If Christianity were represented in its true and proper Light, as the Relief of Woe, as the Cure of Misery, as the Means of Happiness; as that which could even reconcile the pure and holy Law of God itself to our Inclinations, by effecting through a divine Operation, a thorough Change in our Will, and it's Affections; it's amiable Form, it's erect Stature, its due Proportion, aided by that Spark of Grace, yet lodged in every Human Breast, would attract and captivate the willing Mind, and sooth it into Obedience under the mild Yoke of Love.

THESE

THESE were the engaging Means our blessed Saviour used, who therefore was allowed to *peak, as never Man spake*. Come unto me, says he, *all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest*. A Call so sweet, so forcibly inviting, that 'tis surely hard to resist it; 'tis the Height of human Depravity, to be utterly uninfluenced by it. That it may appear in it's full Point of Magnitude, and make a suitable Impression upon your Minds, I shall consider first, the State of the Persons called; secondly, the gracious Remedy and Relief proposed; and thirdly, endeavour to press the Invitation.

I. First then we are to consider the State of the Persons called; *All ye that labor and are heavy laden*. The Call then is universal; for who is there, that laboreth not? who is there that is not heavy laden? *Yea, the whole Creation*, says St. Paul, *groaneth, and travaileth with Pain together*. Man, in particular, *is born to Sorrow, as the Sparks fly upward*. He entereth into Life in Tears, and he departeth out of it with a Groan. The common and successive Afflictions incidental to us, are too heavy and too numerous to give Way to the Dissipations of Vanity; and 'tis but a weak as well as abject Species of Philosophy, that expects to conquer *Evils*, by subduing *Thought*. Man has no Remedy in Nature, for those pressing Calamities, to which he is continually subject; and perhaps the Apprehensions of an approaching Mis-

fortune is more excruciating to the Mind, than the Sensation of one actually befallen us. Again, Man is a laboring wretched Being, on account of the *restless* Disposition of his Mind. Doth not the whole Tenor of his Life bear Evidence of a Birth from that miserable Spirit that *goeth about seeking Rest, and findeth none?* The Objects of Yesterday's Delight are grown stale and insipid To-day; and that which occupies the present Hour, will assuredly weary him To-morrow. The Reason is, that Desire (which when rightly directed is the Soul's Capacity for Bliss) being pointed towards improper, insufficient, perishable Objects, unequal to itself, (which is unperishing and immortal) it becomes a constant Source of Disappointment, Anguish and Woe; an Hunger which can never be satisfied, and an unquenchable Thirst. The bitter Sense of this continual Pain, (though the true Cause of it is little perceived and less considered) stirs up a feverish Impatience of the Mind; a Murmuring against God's Dispensations, a Wrathfulness against his Law, yea, Aversion and Enmity against God himself. Is this a false Representation or aggravated Description? Is it not the common Experience of every one? Who is there, that will not at least allow something to be still wanting, to entitle him to the Appellation of a happy Man? That *Something* unpossessed is the inward continual Cause of Uneasiness, Anxiety, and
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petulant Complaint. He places the Want of his Felicity, perhaps in the Want of some *external* Object, and knoweth not that the Defect is really altogether *internal*. It consists in a Heart unchanged, and a Desire irregularly directed, the ingenuous Artificers of perpetual Vexation. Go now, try every Expedient, and rack Invention to supply new Means of momentary Gratification. And what are these, but like the Crackling of Thorns under a Pot? What are these, but wretched Palliatives, which do but strengthen the Disease they were designed to cure? The Dissemblers of the present Evil, the Propagators of additional Disorders! O! Man, wretched Man, the Sport of turbulent Passions, the Slave of inordinate Appetites, *who shall deliver thee from this Body of Death?*

THUS were we to consider this unhappy Being simply, as burthened with *himself*, his own perverse Will and Affections, his Load would appear almost insupportable. How much more, if we take a further View of him, as under the weighty Pressure of Guilt and Condemnation!

MAN is a restless Being, because he is a guilty Being. Where there is no Peace, there can be no Rest, and *there is no Peace saith God to the Wicked*. Now this Burthen is laid on every Child of Adam, in as much as *all have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God. The Scripture hath concluded all under Sin, saying, there is none that doeth good, no*

not one. Who art thou then, that exceptest thyself from this general Accusation? Who art thou, that justifiest thyself in the Sight of God? It were indeed an empty Boast, a vain Presumption, a desperate Attempt. Let the transcendent Purity of God's Law be fully weighed on one Side, and the Short-comings of the best, and the abominate Defilements of the most of us on the other; and then the Appeal may be securely made to every human Breast. Then shall *God be justified in his Saying, and clear when he is judged; yea beyond all Doubt, God shall be found true, and every Man a Liar.* If all then are become guilty, no Wonder that they should be void of Rest, and travailing in Pain. Even in the Midst of Riot and Wantonness, Conscience will ever and anon intrude, at least a *momentary* Visitant; but in every Pause and Interval of Pleasure, she becomes a loud and clamorous Appellant. In vain we flee from the Refuge of one Dissipation to another; the Ghosts of our past Actions still haunt us, and we can no more avoid the Horror of their Deformity, than we can escape from ourselves. We cannot, I say, avoid, we cannot entirely shake off this Horror of the Mind; and what is worse, it is further introductory to another Source of Pain and Disquiet, namely the Fear of Death.

THE very Thoughts of parting with those Things in which our Hearts are bound, are very grievous and afflicting. To yield up at
once

once all we are possessed of, our Houses, Lands, our Honors, Name and popular Renown; Nay to be torn from the Arms of those, whose Tenderneſs calls the Grave cruel, and Death an inexorable Tyrant; these Thoughts are inexpressibly torturing to the natural Man, because on these Goods he had placed his All of Happiness. And yet how light will even this Load appear, when compared with the overwhelming Weight of a guilty Conscience. It is something more than *Fear* he suffers, 'tis *Anguish* and *Despair*. To be without Hope, because without the Experience of God's Grace in this World, opens a fearful Looking for of Judgment to come. In vain his anxious Spirit exhausts Imagination, to furnish new Supplies of frivolous Excuses; every Plea stands refuted; his Mouth is stopped, and his sandy Foundation fails under his Foot. The Sentence of Death is written on his Heart; a total Alienation from Light and Truth, and from the Face of God for ever! an Eternity of Torments amongst horrid Fiends, wailing and lamenting, cursing and blaspheming from the Extremity of their Pains! such are the terrible Apprehensions of the dying Sinner, when every human Comfort fails; when even the old Expedient of successive Amusements grows tedious and impertinent, and only aggravates his Woe. The barbed Dart is fixed, and the officious Hand that endeavours to pluck it out, does but encrease the

the Pain, and rends the very Heartstrings
O thou, who in the busy Engagement of
Vice, Pleasure or Vanity, art *treasuring up*
to thyself Wrath against the Day of Wrath,
go to a School like this; attend the Death-
bed, be Witness of the agonizing Groans of
a despairing Sinner, and then deliberate on
thy future Course of Life.

BUT whither do these Reflections lead us?
and to what Purpose have we dwelt thus
long on the wretched, helpless, restless State
of Man, but that we might point out to him
the only and the ample Remedy for all his
Ills; Rest, Peace and Salvation in Jesus
Christ our Lord? which is the second general
Head proposed.

II. THIS indeed is the proper Object of
the Gospel; it is therefore called the good
News; *the glad Tidings of great Joy which*
shall be to all People; and to whom are
glad Tidings most acceptable, but to those
who are laboring under present heavy Afflic-
tion? It is therefore particularly addressed
to the Poor in Spirit, to the Meek, to the
broken-hearted Mourner, to the returning
Prodigal, to the lowly humbled Sinner, who
renouncing himself is *without Strength*, to
him, who pretending no longer to any own
Righteousness, *submitteth unto the Righteous-*
ness of God by Faith: He that hath Ears to
bear let him hear; it offereth *Rest to them that*
labor and are heavy laden. All Men indeed
are heavy laden, but all do not labor alike.

Some

Some are asleep under their Burthen, and therefore they perceive it not. But if any do sincerely grieve and complain of their intolerable Load of Guilt and Sin, Christ speaketh *Peace* unto them, he giveth *Rest*. He giveth *Rest* to the Guilty, having made the full Atonement for their Sins. He hath promised, *Whosoever believeth in me, shall not perish, but have everlasting Life. Who then is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right Hand of God, who also maketh Intercession for us.* And we know that his Intercession cannot be cast out, for his Blood pleadeth in our Favor; his Blood, which *speaketh better Things than the Blood of Abel.* There is therefore no *Condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus; for they have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear; but they have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby they cry Abba Father. The Spirit itself beareth Witness with their Spirit that they are the Children of God.* Therefore is the Spirit of Christ, or the Holy Ghost, called the Comforter. *When I go, says our blessed Lord, I will send the Comforter.* And what is this Comforter to effect? First, *he shall convince the World of Sin:* the Act of a wise and good Physician, who first probes the Wound, before he attempts to heal it. But then secondly, he shall convince the *World of Righteousness;* not that he shall convince the Sinner of his own Righteousness, but

but of the *Righteousness of Jesus Christ*, who is therefore called the **LORD OUR RIGHTE-
OUSNESS**, because the Sinner is permitted to plead with Effect all the Merit of Christ's Life, Sufferings and Death, that *he may be made the Righteousness of God in Christ.*

THIRDLY, he shall convince the World of Judgment; because the Prince of this World is judged. It hath been already shown that one chief Cause of Man's Misery is owing to the restless Disposition of his Mind, ever restless, because under an evil, false, impetuous Direction towards Objects, which continually flee the Pursuit, or, if attained, only serve to prove their own Vanity, and leave an aching void in the Breast, all gloomy, disappointed and rapacious. Now this is originally occasioned by the Power and Dominion exercised over the fallen Creature by *the Prince of this World.* He is called the Prince of this World, because the worldly, carnal Mind, which is at enmity with God, is wholly stirred up by this pernicious Agent. He hath established his Throne even in the very Heart of Man, and from thence he issues out Laws to the Will, influences the Affections, and leads the Reason captive! From hence arise all airy vain Conceits, disturbed Imaginations, and irregular Desires; and therefore he is likewise called by *St. Paul*, the Prince of the Power of the Air, Eph. ii. 2. *The Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of Disobedience*

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bedience. Now till this evil Influence is removed, it is impossible the Mind should attain to its right Biass, and consequently the Man must be miserable. Mark then how apposite is the Remedy proposed. *The Prince of this World is judged.* And what is the Judgment, Sentence, or Condemnation? why Christ himself informs us *John xii. 31. The Prince of this World shall be cast out.* He shall be dethroned, dispossessed of his Power, so that *Sin shall not have Dominion over us.* He shall be subdued by the Power of the Lord Jesus, who was therefore first revealed to Man, as the Seed which should bruize the Serpent's Head. *When a strong Man armed keepeth his Palace, his Goods are in Peace. But when a stronger than he shall come and overcome him, he taketh from him all his Armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his Spoils,* Luke xi. 21, 22. And this Christ has effected for us, for *having spoiled Principalities and Powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them,* Col. ii. 15. And the Fruits of that Victory which he hath so gloriously gained, his holy Spirit imparteth to every believing Heart; yea, *we become more than Conquerors through Christ that loveth us,* Rom. viii. 37. Nor is this all, for not only is the hateful Tyranny of Satan abolished, but the Soul is brought under the mild, gentle Sway of Christ's Scepter. The Will is subdued and regulated; the Affections changed, and directed towards
their

their proper Object, that being filled with all the fullness of God, they might receive an overflow of Joy, and Bliss unutterable. The dictates and inferences of Reason are informed and rectified, till *every Thought is brought into Captivity to the Obedience of the Lord Jesus*. Here then the laboring Soul may rest, because it is no longer distracted by *Diversity*, but held in *Unity*; here the *immortal* Soul may rest, for ever rest, because the Object of it's Desire is infinite and eternal. Here may it rest secure and unmolested by the Fear of Death, because Death can deprive it of nothing which it has not already renounced. *It hath cast it's Anchor within the Veil, and neither Death nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate it from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*. This Anchor of the Soul (namely *the full assurance of Hope*) keepeth it stedfast and unmoveable, amidst all the Storms of Adversity, or the Tempests of Affliction: Nay, that Paradox inconceivable to the natural Man, is well understood by the Christian, namely, that one can rejoice, yea glory in *Tribulation*. And this is owing to the Justness of that Ballance, in which he hath learned to weigh all Human Events, so that he counteth all Affliction *light*. *Our light Affliction* (says St. Paul) *which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a*
far

far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory. And in another Place he setteth forth in what particular Manner this blessed Work is carried on and accomplished; *Tribulation worketh Patience, and Patience Experience, and Experience Hope, and Hope maketh not ashamed, because the Love of God is shed abroad in our Hearts, by the Holy Ghost given unto us.* Behold (says St. James) *we count them happy which endure*; and the Reason of this is accounted for by the Apostle to the Hebrews, in as much as it is the Proof of their Adoption: *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and scourgeth every Son, whom he receiveth.* This Consideration is surely healing, it poureth in the Wine and the Oyl into the wounded Spirit, and giveth Medicine to heal our Sickness. What then is the Conclusion, but that, however miserable and void of Rest, is the State of Man by Nature, there yet (through Grace) *remaineth a Rest to the People of God.* What the Law therefore could not do, *in that it was weak through the Flesh*; what human Reason could not do, because it is enslaved to our corrupt Affections, what the several Schemes of Philosophy could never effect, in as much as *God hath made foolish the Wisdom of this World*; even that is accomplished by *the Power of God unto Salvation*; the Power of God *who was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself*, that he might thereby give Rest to them that Labour and are heavy Laden. Give me

me leave therefore in the last Place, to apply and press the Invitation.

III. The Call is general, 'tis universal, no one is exempted, and behold, *all Things are ready*. The deep price of your Redemption is already paid down; Christ's Arms are open to receive you, and *him that cometh unto me* (says he) *I will in no wise cast out*. Here is no exception made of any particular Sins, or any particular Sinner. The only condition of Acceptance is to come; *come unto me and I will give you Rest*. He doth not say wait till you grow better, till you perceive Rest from the Condemnation of your Conscience, and *then* come unto me. No, if you wait till you grow better, without coming to Christ, you may wait till you perish everlastingly. *Whilst we were without strength* (says St. Paul) *in due time Christ died for the ungodly*. Now if we are without Strength till we have availed ourselves of Christ, where is our *Power* to grow better? Come then unto Christ, and he will give you Strength; Come unto Christ, and he will *give you power to become the Children of God*, John i. 12. Come unto Christ therefore, just as you are, laden with Guilt, and groaning under Sin; look up unto Christ who was pierced for your Sins, and bruised for your Iniquities; Come unto Christ *to Day, while it is called to Day*, nor idly trust to the uncertainties of to-morrow. O let the Power of Christ constrain your Hearts, for *his Yoke*

is

is easy, and his Burthen is light. Come, for it is Christ that calleth, and behold, there is no terror in *his* Voice; 'tis not accompanied with dreadful Thunder, as once when the Law was delivered on Mount Sinai; 'tis *the small still Voice of God*, saying, *Why will ye die, O House of Israel.* The Commission he hath given to his Ministers is to preach the Gospel to every Creature; it is the Gospel of the Grace of God, the everlasting Gospel, the Power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth, that he should not perish, but have everlasting Life. As Ambassadors therefore for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God. Come then whilst the Spirit and the Bride say come, and let him that is a-thirst come, and whosoever will, let him take of the Water of Life freely.

LIBERTY.

An ODE.

I.

O'ER Hill, o'er Dale, o'er Mountains wide
extent,

In quest of LIBERTY I fondly stray'd;
Still wander'd on, unknown where I went;

Charm'd by report alone I lov'd the Maid.
For oft in Senates had I heard her Name;

In populous Meeting oft applauded high:
And sometimes, speaking through the Trump of
Fame,

Patriots had claim'd her for their near Ally.
O tell me where's this Wonder to be found?
Or lives she in the Air? Or dwell's on fairy
Ground?

II.

As late I fought her in a verdant Grove,
A Nymph approach'd, and whisper'd in my Ear,
" Give o'er thy Search, see Liberty in Love;
" Give o'er thy Search; the ready Nymph is
" here.

" By these distinguish'd Names I'm far ador'd;
" And all the Gay, and all the Young are mine;
" No rude Restraint my spacious Courts afford;
" No peevish Laws the loosen'd Will confine.
" Yet some, or dull of Taste, are over nice,
" Spurn all these proffer'd Goods, and madly call
" me Vice.

III.

III.

She spoke; and now presenting (as in play)
A Fillet, fain she would have bound my Eyes;
But I impatient of secluded Day,
Resisted warmly, for I scorn'd Surprize.
When lo! three galling Chains before conceal'd,
Dropt from her Side, and rattling fell to Ground:
Lust, Mis'ry, and Death, were on the Fetters
 seal'd;
And each had fretted deep a ghastly Wound.
And art thou Liberty? I smiling said:
The Sorcerers fore dismay'd, with conscious
 Horror fled.

IV.

At Court I ask'd, if Liberty was there;
The Courtiers laugh'd, and ridicul'd her Name:
Yet some had lov'd the visionary Fair;
But solid Gold had wak'd them from their
 Dream.
In vain I sought her in the Soldier's Tent;
The Slave of Glory knew not where she dwelt:
Under her Banners to the Wars he went;
But ne'er her sacred Influence had felt.
In Cities much she's talk'd of, never found:
For Av'rice drove her thence, and still main-
 tains her Ground.

V.

In rural Sports I pass'd a weary Day;
Each jocund Youth pretended she was there.
But Cruelty, and Noise, and wild Dismay,
Could ne'er prevail, if Liberty was near.
But

But oft Licentiousness her name assumes;
 Her easy Gesture, and her light Attire:
 And mingling with the riotous, presumes
 Lawless to sanctify her baleful Fire.
 Oft blazing forth amidst the giddy Croud,
 Treason she leads in Hand, and Ruin threatens loud.

VI.

A * School-master I met, of Brow severe,
 Who held an ancient Book he call'd the Law:
 Aloud he read with Accent full, and clear;
 Prostrate I bow'd with reverential Awe.
 "All this, says he, you strictly must obey;
 "Nor dream of Liberty, this side the Grave."
 Then sternly viewing me, he went his way;
 And left me doom'd an everlasting Slave.
 How shou'd I dare to disobey his Will?
 Or how shou'd I alas! such strict Commands fulfil?

VII.

Bound by this Law, I labour'd, wept, and pray'd;
 And tedious thought the Day, and long the Night:
 Works left undone my Conscience did upbraid;
 And all was ill perform'd and nothing right.
 All weary and athirst I press'd the Ground;
 And almost wish'd life's fretful Fever o'er:
 When to my Ears a more than mortal Sound,
 Soft, still, and sweet, this Heavenly message bore.
 "Here, lab'rer here, for ever quench thy Thirst;
 "No second Draught you need; sufficient is the
 "first."

VIII.

Ere I stood, and strait a Rock I view'd
 From whence a Stream translucid seem'd to leap:
 Already were my Spirits half renew'd;
 And deep I drank, for O, my Thirst was deep.
 What

* The Law was our School-master to bring us to Christ.
Gal. iii. 24.

What Joy, what Bliss the potent Draught convey'd,

No Tongue can utter, nor no Heart conceive :
Light felt my Bosom, and as Man new made,

From this blest Hour, I but began to live.

All former Years I wish'd to be forgot ;

For all my former Acts were one continued Blot.

IX.

Now from a neighbouring Mount descending down,

Of Angel Form, I saw a smiling Maid :

One Hand a Sponge, the other held a Crown :

“ And now behold true Liberty” she said ;

“ All your Transgressions thus are wip'd away ;

“ And this your growing Faith shall well re-
ward :

“ The Genius of this Rock thus bade me say,

“ The Saviour of my Life, my mighty Lord.

“ He gave me free to rove along the Plains :

“ When Death and Hell, my Foes, he bound in

“ lasting Chains.

X.

Then to my Task with Giant Strength I flew ;

And Liberty my sweet Companion went :

Care fled my Breast, and Toil a pleasure grew ;

Light was the Burthen, and the Yoke unbent.

From Liberty I learnt due Songs of praise ;

From her each blisful Moment to employ :

Loud to the West, my Voice she bade me raise ;

And Wretches call to quaff immortal Joy.

“ Here, Lab'rer here, for ever quench thy Thirst ;

“ No second Draught you need ; sufficient is the

“ first.

TO TRUTH,
AN
IRREGULAR ODE.

I.

HENCE gay Delusions fickle Train;
Ye nimble Shadows, light and vain,
That wanton, glitt'ring in the Eye of Youth:
No more the airy Dance I tread,
By sitting forms to Ruin led;
Your baleful Charms I fly, the Votary of Truth.

II.

Hail holy Dame! of Aspect bright,
Sprung from th' Eternal Fount of Light,
Whose Visage pours the streaming Day,
Where Darkness, brooding Darkness lay!
Before thy Face the Miscreant fled;
And with her all her Phantom's drear;
Pale Horror, of himself afraid,
And teeming Guilt and fell Despair.
What time the Cherub Mercy from on High,
With thee in League conjoin'd, descended from
the Sky.

III.

Fearful the Dawn of Hope bereft!
E're Mercy beam'd with op'ning Grace:
For thou the blasted Earth had'st left;
Had'st left with Man's accursed Race.

Thine

Thine injur'd Cause,
 By Man betray'd;
 Thy broken Laws,
 No more obey'd,
 Drew from thy Virgin Eye the copious tear.
 Then ghastly Vengeance stood,
 And claim'd the forfeit Blood;
 And Justice urg'd the Doom, a Counsellor severe.

IV.

When Mercy lo! of wond'rous Birth,
 In Heav'n begot, tho' born on Earth,
 From the Side issuing of a wounded Lamb:
 All rob'd in White, the meek-ey'd Maid,
 Prepar'd, Man's ruin'd Cause to plead,
 Prepar'd with Ransom due, and sweet Persuasion
 came.

V.

Her blameless Form held Justice mute;
 Her proffer'd Price the Debt o'erpay'd;
 Well pleas'd th' Almighty hear'd her suit,
 In purp'ling Glory fresh array'd!
 Then thou O Truth didst yeild thine Hand,
 In proof of Amity sincere;
 And Peace and Justice knit the band,
 The four-fold band of Concord dear.
 In Heav'n the Gratulations loud began;
 Glory to God on high, Peace and Good-will to
 Man.

VI.

Come lovely Truth, more lovely grown,
 Since Mercy made thee all her own:
 Her Signature she bade thee wear,
 Her greetings sweet to Mortals bear,
 And leave her Name, her Form imprest,
 In living Characters on ev'ry panting Breast.

She bade thee cheer each drooping Heart,
 And wipe the Mourner's beamless Eye;
 It's optick upwards taught to dart,
 To meet the Day-spring from on high.
 Full in the View, th' attoning Cross present;
 The mangl'd Body bare, with clotted Gore
 besprent.

VII.

O come thou then, not wrapp'd in Cloud,
 Nor as in *Sinai* thund'ring loud;
 Nor yet in mystic form be seen,
 By Fancy drefs'd, the pageant Queen.
 Come, but with look serene, and clear,
 Such as in Heav'n thou'rt wont t'appear.
 Each Fear, each trembling Doubt repell,
 Here guest Divine, here deign to dwell;
 The frantic Dreams of Vanity controul;
 O pour God's fulness on my ravish'd Soul,
 Confirming ev'ry Grace, and realize the whole. }

THE

THE J U D G M E N T.

An O D E.

I.

FROM Heav'n a Voice; a Voice from Heav'n
I hear;

It's rapid Power thrills through ev'ry Vein:
An End is come:—the Day, the Day is near;
Time flags his Pinions, nor shall rise again.
Hoary Eternity's capacious Maw
The worn-out Fugitive shall soon devour:
An Angel utter'd the tremendous Law;
An Angel glittering in resplendent pow'r,
On Earth and Sea he ballanc'd stood, and swore
By Alpha and Omega, "Time shall be no
more."

II.

"No more; no more;"—it vibrates thro' the
Air;

And scours like Lightning the etherial Sky;
Bursts ev'ry Band, and cuts through ev'ry Bar;
The Day is come;—the End, the End is nigh.—
Why bow the Heav'ns? why deadly dark's the
Sun?

Why rules Disorder in each starry Sphere?
Pale Desolation stalks; her Work's begun;
The Voice permissive charms her cruel Ear.

"No

198 *The Judgment, an ODE.*

“ No more; no more.”——How glides the awful Sound!

Hills, Vales, and Mountains hear, and tremble
all around.

III.

Ye Mould’ring Heaps of Turrets, Domes, and
Spires,

(The Works of Ages, and the Boast of Art)

How do ye feed Destruction’s bick’ring Fires,

Whose wasting Flames the All of Light impart!

Weep not, ye Just, though e’en the sacred Fane

(Where erst ye met the Lord in frequent pray’r;)

It’s Rites, it’s Vestments, Altars plead in vain;

And roars it’s Ruin to the burthen’d Air.

God in the Lamb a Temple doth supply;

The Lamb that dy’d, and rose, and lives no more
to die.

IV.

Prepare the Way—He comes—Prepare the Way—

The Clouds disparting burst beneath his feet:

See from the East how streams the new-born Day!

What Glories keen my throbbing Eye-balls
meet!

High in the van a splendid Cross display’d,

Summons each Angel from his blest Abode:

Ten thousand times ten thousand stand array’d;

Beaming fresh Brightness from the Son of God.

Hift, reverential Silence holds the Throng;

While Expectation waves her brooding Wing
along.

V.

The Word is past; and let the Trumpet sound;

The pealing Clangor that awakes the Dead.

The rattling Echo tears th’embowell’d Ground;

And mocks at sluggard Nature’s drouzy Bed.—

“Awake

The Judgment, an ODE. 199

“Awake, awake; forth from thy coward Grave,
“Thou guilty wretch, to Judgment speed away:
“An Angel’s Arm arrests thee; nought shall save;
“Nor Pray’rs nor Tears, procure a longer day.
“See where he stands thy Judge; revere his Mien,
“Majestically sweet, and awefully serene.”——

VI.

Mark where the Murd’rer creeps with stealthy
Pace;

Exploring ev’ry Cleft with anxious Dread:
Each Refuge crumbles at his curst Embrace;
And leaves to Vengeance bare his baleful Head.—

The pamper’d Letcher aches with chilling Fears;
E’en his Lust freezes in his marrow’d Spine.—
Deist and Atheist stop their sullen Ears;

And winking strive to exclude the Light Di-
vine.——

The rash Blasphemer bites his hell-fraught
Tongue:

Th’ Apostate yelling screams with inward Furies
stung.——

VII.

Abash’d the fierce Oppressor downward low’rs.—

The Care-worn Miser smites his flinty Heart.
Pride mourns the Rubbish of his cloud-capp’d
tow’rs;

And poorly practises the humble Part.——

The Fools of Vanity, and Slaves of Sense,
Bedew Time’s hopeless Tomb with many a
Tear;

Each faint Excuse, each frivolous Pretence
Is swallowed up in absolute Despair.——

The Liar, Pilf’rer, Cheat, together lye,
And grub-like dig a Grave, to shun th’ all seeing
Eye.

VIII.

VIII.

But O in vain.—Nor Earth, nor Sea can hide
 Whom Truth arraigns, by Justice guilty found:
 The thund'ring Sentence, they must still abide;
 Though their Souls shudder at the dreadful
 Sound.

“Depart, ye Curst to everlasting Fire
 “Prepar'd for Satan's Host, with them to dwell:
 “There rack'd with all the Workings of Desire
 “Nurtur'd yet unallay'd in raging hell.
 “Associates there in Ill, for ever prove
 “Th' Effects, who Mercy scorn'd, who scorn'd
 “redeeming Love.”

IX.

Far other Aspects wear God's chose Race,
 Their fair Fronts glist'ning from the mystic Seal:
 Enwapt they hear their Saviour Face to Face
 Their Faith approve, their promis'd Bliss reveal.
 “O ye, who well the Cause of God maintain'd,
 “Nor shrunk in sore Temptation's evil Day;
 “Who from renewed Light, new Lustre gain'd;
 “Nor quench'd the kindlings of th' imparted
 “Ray:
 “Bright as your Faith the Crown of Vict'ry wear:
 “My Suff'ring, ye partook; my Glories ye shall
 “share.”

F I N I S.

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